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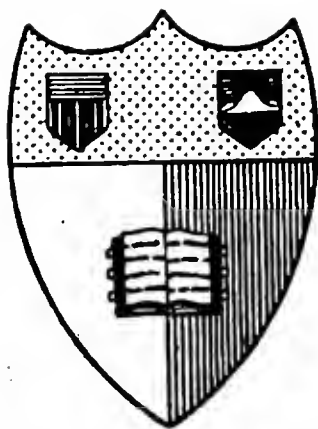
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THE GIFT OF

HENRY W. SAGE

1891

ANECDOTES
OF THE
UPPER TEN THOUSAND:
THEIR LEGENDS AND THEIR LIVES.

BY
GLD
THE HON. GRANTLEY F. BERKELEY,
AUTHOR OF "MY LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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Anecdotes
OF THE
UPPER TEN THOUSAND:
THEIR LEGENDS AND THEIR LIVES.

INTRODUCTION.

IN again laying a new work before the public, I must be permitted to express my deep sense of gratitude for the way in which they have received the former volumes, and in very many instances for the flattering manner in which strangers to me personally have written to express their approbation.

Since the last publication I have thrown myself broadcast—no, not broadcast; for my figure, strange to say, has not yet been dignified into a breadth of waistcoat, nor into that projection likened by some irreverent reviewers unto the representation of a bay-window. I am not thin, though; so let it suffice that I have simply

sought for brain, bone, and muscle, a relaxation by occasionally lying down in the woods among my pets, to delight myself in their single-purposed love and fidelity. We—I speak now in the collective sense, and as to my fellow-men—have not all of us a love of beasts and birds, nor a taste for the entire natural creation of Heaven's holy will: but, thank Heaven, I have an innate desire for research into the customs and manners, habits and propensities, of the smallest insect up to the elephant; and in that pursuit know not time but as it flies, and long to delay the passing of the too-fleeting hour. True historian as I am, I must, however, qualify this allusion as to the speed of time. The only time that time is slow is the period of a lady's promised approach; then, had I a whip for that disagreeable old skeleton depicted as Time, with an efficient scythe in his headless hand to mow down flowers, I regret to say, by choice, instead of the multitude of weeds (which in my opinion would be better made into hay, however scentless or unsweet), by my life I'd make the grinning monster skip, and bring my love at lightning speed to turn my "winter to a glorious summer!"

Well, then, I have refreshed myself; and thus renovated, presume once more to seek the

public approbation, unharmed and unannoyed by the bitter criticism of some self-appointed reviewers, and very well able to laugh at those vipers who grinned a bag of venom, but who lacked the tooth to give it pointed pain.

Among these reviewers, one well known now by the name of Pecksniff ventured to assail me in regard to poor "L. E. L.," having previously pretended to hold communion with her spirit—a spirit far above his now and for ever—though he had the audacity to give the following familiar answer to his questions, and to report it as genuine to his astonished audience.

A wish having been expressed to know something of the state in which the spirit of the deceased authoress was, the "*science*"-guiding Pecksniff announced his willingness to invite her to communion. He, consequently, retired to another room, as I have been informed, and on his return assured his friends "that the spirit of 'L. E. L.' readily came to his call," and replied to his question in the following words—"Thank you, dear Mr. Pecksniff; I am very happy."

Spirit-rappings! I wonder her spirit—if souls could be so irreligiously summoned—did not rap his head instead of the table for his insolence and presumption; though if a spirit had done

so, people in this instance might truly have said that there was "nothing in it," and that "*ex nihilo nihil fit*:" his head being as empty as his assertions; and really it makes one laugh to think of a soul happy in the other world "dearing" such a man as Pecksniff.

To those of the public press who have reviewed me fairly and honestly, no matter whether in praise or blame, I return my thanks. An author must expect no favour, but if there is a hole in his coat it is certain to be laid hold of, and in no way darned, unless "darned to all eternity," as the Yankees have a quaint method of expressing it.

I must, however, in passing, notice the *Saturday Review* of the 28th of July, 1866, which has never shown any partiality, nor even fairness, for me; as has been proved by the way my known enemies cling to its columns when they blame me: for among its well-written but bitter strictures on every man, woman, child, or thing upon earth, it has intensely amused me by its notice of an "old story," or a work written in 1811 by a lady, and entitled the *Mirror of the Graces*.

The species of that delightful regenerator of virtue is not dead yet. I know to this day some old ladies who have similarly vague ideas of pro-

priety: in one instance, the authoress alluded to says, that girls should not even shake hands with their male acquaintances; and in another instance, this severe remarker on manners absolutely holds it up to be the great desideratum of a modest girl to have “her unsunned bosom clasped to the breast of a man of delicacy and worth;”—the *Saturday Review* adds, “we presume, in public:” but that, of course, can only be ascertained from the general tenor of the *Mirror of Graces*, and from the ideas therein advocated. An “unsunned bosom!” Ye gods and goddesses! only think of a lovely bosom that never knew the light or air, nor saw that water and the sun were good!

It chanced to me some time ago to be writing for a weekly periodical, and among the tales offered to its acceptance was one now published in my present volumes, entitled “a tale” of his Grace of Rutland’s beautiful old ruin, “Haddon Hall.”

Now, if there is one thing I pique myself on more than another, it is that I never, by any chance, write anything for publication that any girl might not read. I should dread to see my works lying on very many drawing-room tables—where they assuredly are—if there was a line in

them that was not *comme il faut*. Nothing is more obnoxious, vulgar, or indelicate, than false delicacy ; or a feeling, such as is to be found among the middling classes of America—not in the best classes—which prevents a housemaid going into a dining-room because the table is *en déshabillé* and its legs uncovered ; or shocks a lady's ear by a man speaking to her of his “naked eye.”

The tale to which I allude was sent by me, as usual, to the Editor of the periodical ; and, to my astonishment, returned to me refused, as “unfit for publication.” Upon this I wrote, in some indignation, for further explanation ; and demanded to know which part of the work had been so libelled. The reply was that a scene, which I hope my readers will now make themselves well acquainted with, in the words in which it was originally written, “ was indecent ;” for it was deemed, I need not say by whom, to be most improper for Sir John Manners to kiss Dorothy Vernon in presence of the old deer-keeper, who was lying hidden in the bushes at their feet.

I need not say that it gave me great pleasure to get back the tale of Haddon Hall ; and now to make it, as I do, a considerable item in the intel-

ligence offered to my readers ; and this without fear of condemnation.

The text which I have taken for these volumes is a wide one, and perhaps a difficult one to carry out to the full, and yet harmless extent, desired ; but I still hope to offer much that is strange, as well as curiously interesting, to my readers, when as I am about to deal with the “Lives of the Upper Ten Thousand,” and, therefore, with the ways and customs of others. To set myself right with them I will commence with my own method of passing the time ; and show that, if a man chooses it, he need not be dependent on others for the content and happiness which is, or ought to be, unless under peculiar and extraordinary circumstances, within the reach of us all.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY—EXPERIMENTS IN NATURAL HISTORY
—“YARREL,” HIS BIMACULATED DUCK—THE HYBRID
AND THE MULE—THE BISON AND COMMON COW—THE
NEW FOREIGN SNAKE OF BUCKLAND—SNAKE ON HER
EGGS IN THE REGENT’S PARK—THE GORILLA.

IN the course of my practical and personal studies on Natural History, I have discovered many errors disseminated by the old authorities, such as the “Bimaculated Duck” of “Yarrel,” to which I more particularly allude, because I have proofs of his error at my immediate command; and of the blunders so frequently fallen into by men, learned by repute or hearsay, from others, and not through their own personal and practical experience. In the British Museum there is stuffed—and has been for many years—Yarrel’s “Bimaculated Duck;” which I at once knew to be nothing more than a male Mule, or barren hybrid between the Drake Widgeon and common Duck. Having declared the fact to be as

I state it, I bred and then sent to the Museum a Duck Mule to match the male, and leave no sort of doubt about the matter. For the benefit of my readers not up in these matters, perhaps, it is right for me to explain that a Mule and a Hybrid are not the same things. For instance, a Mule is a cross that will not carry on its species; and a Hybrid is a cross that will breed again to all infinity with its own breed, and with other breeds of certain kinds. Though both are, so to speak, Hybrids, both are *not* "Mules;" the Mule is the one that cannot propagate its species.

My study for years has been an attempt to discover where nature draws the line between particular crosses as to barrenness and fecundity, and, though I know some that are barren, and many that will breed, I am just as much at a loss as ever to discover the exact cause that induces nature to say, "So far shalt thou go, and no further," or to induce her unalterable determination.

There was at one time an idea very prevalent, that the attachment in the breast of a feathered nestling to its foster-mother was contributed through the warmth given to the egg in its progress to perfection; but such is not the case. That affection arises from first sight and first thought; it becomes then confirmed by tender-

ness of rearing in the parent bird. I have changed ducks in immediate progress of hatching to a hen or barn-door fowl; some of the ducks just out of the shell, and others in: all those ducks at once loved the hen, and would, after the first day of sight and knowledge, have shrunk in terror from their natural mother, who had been sitting on them for a month. Again, the same source of affection was visible in the young bisons, brought from America to Taymouth by the late Lord Breadalbane: they loved the cow whom they saw, and of whom they sucked on board the ship; and that did as it always does—it gave them in puberty a desire to mate with the common bull, instead of with a bull of their own kind.

To those inclined to pursue these natural investigations, and to amuse themselves with hybrid creation, I would give this caution: When it can be done, let the creatures you design thereafter to cross be reared by the same kind as those with whom you desire that they should breed, for it facilitates in the young a desire to mate with the perceptible progenitor.

Even this fact is illustrated in every farm-yard. When the good wife has hatched her ducks under hens, the drake, when grown to

maturity, prefers the society of the hens, and makes a duck, to his heart at least, out of every "chuckie" that he sees.

The list of irretrievable mules, or barren crosses, that I have completely ascertained, are as follows:—The pheasant and the barn-door hen; the Muscovy drake and common duck; the widgeon and common duck; the American wood-duck and the pintail.

The hybrids that are fecundite, and will breed on and on, are the pintail and common duck; the beautiful little Bahama drake and the common duck; the dusky duck of America and the common duck; and with these my experience in fowl at present ends.

At one time I thought that the voice of the birds was some direction; but it has nothing to do with the matter. True it is that the call of the male widgeon is perfectly unlike the call of a drake, though the duck widgeon has the cry of a duck. But then the call of the Bahama drake is as unlike the common drake as that of the male widgeon; yet the latter will breed with common ducks, and the offspring will breed again.

If anything has struck me as indicative of facts in this particular, it is the manner and habits of the birds, more than their cries or plu-

mage; and to arrive at this observation the greatest supervision is necessary.

It has frequently happened to me to be shown alleged hybrids, that were not hybrids in any way whatever. Such as pheasant-fowls, crosses also with ducks, and hare-rabbits, as they are called; but having got myself well up in these particulars, I can at a moment dispel all delusion.

In any hybrid cross, and invariably, sire and dam, or cock and hen, share in each limb, in feather and in fur. There is not a feather in the pheasant and fowl hybrid that is not shared in by the paternal and maternal side; and, what is still more curious, there being a few days' difference in the moult of pheasant and fowl, the mule offspring has two moults immediately succeeding each other. I have thus collected the most spotless and beautiful feathers shed on the first moult for ladies' hats; and, strange to say, this double moult does not seem in any way to weaken the doubly-changing-bird.

Hybrids that *are mules*, in the tribes of which I speak, *never lay eggs*; but for all that deficiency they will frequently sit; and when eggs are put under them of a fecundite kind, they will hatch and tend them with the greatest possible care—with this curious addition, that they have no

desire to drive away their young when reared to maturity. My notice to their desire to sit was first drawn to a hen mule of mine, who was always sitting on one spot on the bare ground. At first I deemed her ill, but on moving her I discovered that the object of her maternal solicitude was an oyster-shell, the white side uppermost. So I made her a nest, put some hens' eggs under her, which she hatched, and then proved herself an excellent foster-mother.

I am sorry to say that philosophers, and naturalists generally, are very easily deceived, and that they like also to deceive themselves. As witness the new foreign snake of Buckland, which never was anything but the common "brown snake" of this country; and the preposterous idea of the snake in the Regent's Park Gardens *sitting to hatch her own eggs*, whereas the poor reptile simply coiled herself round them to keep them from man, having no proper place provided for her to bury them. Philosophers and naturalists, too, have been natural enough to believe in the *roars* of the great monkey gorilla, and in the force of his blows, when, as any man not fond of indulging in a mare's-nest must know, that the monkey tribe are governed by the natural laws and instincts of the race, and that monkeys do not

roar or strike. They invariably claw with the open hand, and chatter, or "jabber." It is enough to make a lion roar, could he but hear that he was said to have been out-roared and terrified by a big inactive monkey.

I do not mean to tire my readers by alluding to the ridiculous fallacy put forth as to salmon and the salmon ladders. What I have ever said will one day be found to be the truth. No salmon ever went up such ladders so placed as those I have seen in Hampshire and Dorsetshire. Ignorant Commissioners, who have all their lives "sat by the wall instead of by the water," cannot have studied the habits of salmon, trout, and fish as I have; if they had, they would have known that the ordinations of creation cannot in some particulars be contravened by those of man, and that as a salmon "shoots a fall" swift, immediate, and direct as an arrow from a bow, no steps that they can offer, through "a ladder," to his legless body, will make him change his instincts and wind about as an eel through holes by nature unexpected.

It may, perhaps, be in the remembrance of some of my readers, that some time ago I alleged that there were thousands and thousands of acres of land and water in the United Kingdom that, up

to the present time, had lain fallow from anything that was either amusing or useful, whereas on sites that could not be made available to remunerative agriculture, that hitherto barren acreage of land and water might be made both useful and ornamental, as well as amusing to its possessors. Thus I have seen expansive acres of water without a fowl on their surface, or a fish worth catching in their deeps. I have seen miles and miles of moss-covered swampy bogs, without a rill of water being disclosed, and not earth enough shown to hold a worm and attract a snipe ; and I have longed for some such place to be put at my disposal in order to experimentalise, and at least try to prove my assumptions, as to making barren places useful, to be correct. However Paganini might have pleased his audience by playing on a single string, it is not my intention to harp too long on one ; therefore, with my readers' leave, for the present we will postpone the "anecdotes" on this subject of the latter years of "my life" to another chapter, varied by an intervening change.

CHAPTER II.

HADDON HALL — THE REIGNS OF MARY AND ELIZABETH —
THE EARL OF RUTLAND — SIR JOHN MANNERS — “THE
KING OF THE PEAK” — SIR GEORGE VERNON — HIS
DAUGHTER, DOROTHY VERNON — THE MASQUED BALL —
ELOPEMENT — MURDER, AND THE LAST EXECUTION THAT
TOOK PLACE WITHOUT TRIAL BY JURY.

PART I.

OF all the gifts which a liberal Providence has
assigned to man, there is scarce one which makes
him at times more

“glorious,
O’er all the ills of life victorious,”

than that of “building castles in the air.”

Stretched on a bed of suffering with a broken
bone, there are whiles when, freed from immediate
pain, he can lie on the narrow confines of his six-
foot mattress, and, as a mental emperor, he can
be more of a monarch than a king who fills the
throne of realms. That castle-building in the air
has been a favourite pursuit of mine; and many
an hour, when I have been compassed by danger

and surrounded with enough to have made any man miserable, I have forgotten for the time each sorrow, each deed of ingratitude from those who ought to have had affectionate consideration for me, and risen on the full tide of joyous imagination to halls of bliss, to forests of deer, to stables and kennels of horses and hounds, and to a position where charity might have been as ample as its virtues, even in poverty, are great, as well as incumbent on every Christian, on every soldier and gentleman.

I never visit the ancient and romantic ruin of castle or hall without feeling inclined to seat myself on some time-worn stone or buttress, to commune with the spirits of other times. Spirits who had loved there, spirits who had fought there, and who, instead of knocking with impossible knuckles against tables, obedient to penny-seeking profligates in scenes termed Sciences, were really hovering round the living soul of one who would have loved and fought as they had done, had but the mysterious essence of being, twined us all together.

Among the many graceful and venerable

heard various accounts; not only of its picturesque beauty, but of the romantic love-affair in which Sir John Manners carried off the daughter and sole heiress of Sir George Vernon, in those days better known as “the King of the Peak” in Derbyshire, whose property and splendid residence Haddon Hall then was.

A mysterious longing having seized on me to see this place, and to gather anecdotes of the Upper Ten Thousand, however ancient their dates—having asked his Grace’s permission to have the free run of the ruin, and, to while away the time if I wished it, leave to cast my fly in the preserved waters for trout, I set off from town, and shortly found myself in close approximation—not, I hope, to the “ruin of my studies,” so to speak, but to the ruined mansion of Haddon Hall, there to learn, in the midst of time-dilapidated fanes, oriel windows, tapestried chambers, and kerb-stones still bearing the deep impress of the heel of heavily-armed and iron-clad men, how “Dorothy Vernon” was wooed, and how won; by which gateway she eloped with her lover, and on what occasion; and what were the domestic circumstances by which, at the time, they were surrounded. In short, “by what mighty magic” *not* a handsome knight had won a bride, who

eventually transferred the splendid domains of her father to the already far-extending acres of the lords of Belvoir Castle.

What castles I built in the air, with what spirits I conferred, or seemed to confer, the reader will learn from the following pages. While imagining these things, either stretched on the velvet turf sloping from the Hall to the river at its foot, or sunning myself in that self-same ray of light that, at that same hour, once came through that same casement, as Dorothy sat in her drawing-room and thought on her lover, illuminating her cheek as it did mine, no thought of the world's woes affected me; no shade of sorrow came across "the light of other days:" I was alone, the monarch of all I saw, or thought that I saw; and, in a beautiful dream assuredly, I "had—my hour."

But here—and according to truth I must say, that if "She" had come to stray on those lawns with me, they were open to the public, and for *her* I need have asked not special permission: perhaps a brighter degree of poetry would have illumined my spirit, and I should have written more eloquently than I have; or perhaps—Heaven save the mark!—"she" would have put all Dorothys out of my head; for she would have

been called by another name. And who is "she?" I think I hear the reader say, as a young lady said to me at Brighton, whom I did not then know, when she asked me for the flower in my coat; and I replied it was not mine to give, as "she," my love, had given it. My love had not really given it; I had plucked it myself.

Who is she? Let Echo answer, "Who?" It is enough for me to know that she exists; and that, whatever be my destiny, wherever I travel, and as long as I breathe, in destiny, travail, and life, she must be loved with all my heart and soul, and with an intensity beyond compare. The only reader that can know who she is, must read with her soft, thoughtful, dove-like eyes; for none will ever learn the fact from word or sign of mine.

Among the institutions of Great Britain of which the country has reason to be proud, is that of the Public Press. Freedom of discussion, freedom of opinion, and freedom to review the books of others, albeit whether the reviewer is capable or incapable, are the attributes which ought to constitute the valuable utility of the widely-embracing pen, but at the same time to restrain it from the vicious propensities and inherent incli-

nations of those who, in many instances, from need, personal lust, or enmity, wield their self-constituted power to minister to their passions, or to work out their private animosity.

This I have shown to have been the case with poor "L. E. L. ;" and, were it necessary, many more instances could be adduced in proof of what I say : but my wish is not to work up, or hurt, or invite the angry feelings of anybody, but rather to consider the immense value of the Public Press, while at the same time I do not pass over the faults of which the institution at times is still as the beast of burthen.

I have often wondered at the powers of the reporters in the House of Commons, at open-air meetings, or on the hustings of an election ; and, indeed, I have known many a speaker, if so his oration would enable me to call him, in the House of Commons and on the hustings, deeply indebted to the fact, that though in his case the "schoolmaster" seemed to have for ever been "at home," nevertheless the reporter had been and was "abroad," and by his better education and his good nature he put the speaker's words into their proper places, made sense of incoherent mal-expressions, stifled tautology, and placed what the speaker ought to have said, but not what

he did say, in decent guise before the eyes of readers.

In my own instance I have, in the many works which I have written, been very severely reviewed, and not always reviewed in the serviceable and legitimate way. That is, reviewers have attacked me personally, and applied their argument to the man instead of to the matter; and I must say, and I say it with every certainty of being backed in it by every acquaintance I have, that some of those pretending to review me have utterly perverted my disposition and desires, and depicted me as the reverse of what I am.

Except at home, by your own fireside, there is no place where man can be more comfortable than at his inn; always supposing that that inn is a clean and well-provided one, with wealth of cold water and good wine. In an inn of the best sort, prettily built and beautifully situated, the clear waters of the deeply-bedded Derwent running at the foot of the flower-garden, I found myself in the bright month of July, 1863. Bright, indeed! too bright for me to make any use of the kind permission of the Duke of Rutland to fish in the preserved waters of the Wye or Derwent; for in the latter, where there are the most trout,

there was scarce a foot of water, save in some shallow holes, and the trout were as well aware of the switch of a fly-rod as the columbine of a pantomime is of the wave of a fairy's wand. The chief object that I had in view, when thus finding myself comfortably domiciled in the Peacock at Rowsley, was to inspect, linger around, and admire, that perfect representation of the Hall of the olden time called "Haddon." Having ordered a slice of salmon, a roast duck and green peas, and a far-famed Bakewell cake, with a pint of sherry and some pale ale for my dinner, a fly was announced, and I proceeded in the first instance to the Church at Bakewell, where I found the utmost kind civility from the Incumbent and his family, and all attention at the hands of the clerk. My object there was to see the tombs of the Vernons, and that of Sir John Manners, who married the last-surviving daughter and heiress of Sir George Vernon, through whom the splendid domain came into the possession first of the Earls and then of the Dukes of Rutland. A portion of the church has been enlarged and modernized : but there yet remain a considerable part of the ancient or primeval structure, and many a worn and indented stone that has felt the pressure of the barefooted friar, or rang beneath the

sonorous chanting of the monks, in the early Norman days and in the reign of King John.

In the older part of the church may be seen the very rudest type of Norman Billetmould, with sundry traces in the walls of alteration and improvement of very ancient date—probably made to suit the increase of the congregation. Within the scope of some modern enlargements—I am loath to say improvements, for I do not like an interference with venerable structures — have come the elaborate tombs of Sir George Vernon, better known in his time by the appellation of “King of the Peak,” and those of his son-in-law, Sir John Manners, who eloped with his sole remaining daughter, Dorothy, from her home at Haddon Hall, and thus brought to the ancestors of the present Duke of Rutland the Hall and its wide domains.

On gaining their tombs I observed that great care had been bestowed by the sculptor on the form of Sir George Vernon, represented as it is, recumbent between his two wives.

The figure and face are not represented as is usually seen—a grim-visaged, stalwart knight, with a beard, and no other expression; but infinite pains seem to have evidently been bestowed to give the lineaments of a handsome counte-

nance and an aquiline nose, while the figure is remarkably neat, and if rather slight, still tall and well-formed. On turning from the tomb of the King of the Peak to that of Sir John and Lady Manners, my eye was at once arrested by the shape of the Knight's head. The figure is kneeling on one side, and his lady at the other. Her features are remarkably small, as if they had been chiselled so for some reason ; but the head of the Knight was so much out of all usual proportion that I was at a loss to account for it, and stood in mute contemplation. The forehead is utterly depressed ; in fact, there can scarce be said to be any ; while the entire skull recedes backward from the brow in the most extraordinary shape I ever saw. My attendant, it would seem, gathered at a glance what it was that riveted my attention, when he said, "No doubt, sir, you are struck with the formation of the head. Many visitors to the church have blamed the sculptor ; but when the alterations caused these tombs to be interfered with a skull was found beneath, bearing in its construction such a close resemblance to that you are looking at, that there is no doubt but that there was an intention in the artist of the time to illustrate the peculiarity. This tomb bears date in the 26th of the reign of Elizabeth, 1584.

Sir George Manners, the last of the Rutland family who resided at the Hall, the son of Sir John and Dorothy, who married the 2nd daughter of Sir H. Pierpoint, and died in 1623, has also a very elaborate tomb. There is a space on the tablet evidently left for the date of the death of his wife, but which has never been filled up. They had nine children, all of whom are represented on the tomb: the youngest died immediately after birth, and was buried in a species of swaddling cloth, as shown on the tomb; and when the tomb was interfered with, the remains of the child were found without a coffin.

The inspection of an old church, and the tombs of those who from the dark space of the silent vault might murmur up to my ear, "I, too, was a soldier, a knight, and huntsman, and once loved the living sun that now delighteth thee," ever inclines me to rather a saddening theme of thought; and I left the beautiful old church to proceed to mine inn at Rowsley, trying to hum a lively tune and to gladden my eyes with the bright and sunny prospect, in order to rouse myself out of more serious reflection. Succeeding in this, when I entered the comfortable Peacock Inn and asked for my dinner, all gloomy sensations had fled; so, like a good general, I very soon

harassed their retreat by an appeal to some very good light sherry and sufficient bitter ale. The next morning saw me in my fly again on my way to the Hall itself, and feeling sure that I should find enough there to make me tarry, mine hostess put me up some sandwiches and a flask of sherry; and so backed I very soon entered the park of Haddon Hall, crossed the pretty rippling river Wye, which murmurs at the foot of the terrace walls, and entered the neatly-kept lodge of the housekeeper, "Mrs. Bath," which domicile used to be the stables to the establishment. Having shown my credentials, from her I received every possible attention; and while making the tour of the building it gave me the greatest pleasure to be able, most justly, to compliment her on the attention she paid to all the interests under her care. There was not a room that was not as well aired and as cleanly swept as any in an inhabited mansion. Ascending the hill from Mrs. Bath's lodge to the low entrance-door to the building, the first thing that struck me over the stone entrance to the outer terrace was the quartering of my own shield with that of the Vernons, the "ten crosses" very visible; a fact of which I had not been till that moment aware. Within the

court of the Hall there was everything to admire; for before the eye of modern inspection stood, not in vain, but in massive maintenance of the strength bestowed by the hand of men in dangerous times, the walls, the pavements, the wainscots, the tapestries, and the floors, as they were when Dorothy, in her fantastic disguise at her father's masqued ball, fled to the bosom of a Manners. There was the Chaplain's room, near the gateway, so that he might be accessible to any of the flock that sought him. On the table of the Chaplain's room lay some of the boots of Cromwell's time and other old things, and two or three rude hunting-horns, such as you see round-cheeked visages blowing as they run after deer on tapestried sylvan revelations. One of these I put to my lips, and blew such a rough, discordant blast, as I have no doubt shook the forms of the old deer-keeper and the old huntsman, as they are represented in their portraits in the great hall. Leaning against the side of the entrance to the court was Sir George Vernon's old mash-tub for brewing; but neither the size of that, nor the size of the cellars and kitchen, came up to my idea of what it really required to furnish forth the feasts I heard of. The cellar was eleven yards each way, and the

kitchen ten. The dining-hall was ample and curious, and on its walls some of the finest antlers of red and fallow deer I ever saw : proving again, had proof been needed, of how the race of each have deteriorated in modern days—all, all for want of the infusion of fresh blood. On one side of this hall, and at a considerable distance from the dais, nailed to the wall, there was a single handcuff, which, supposing the wrist of a middle-sized man to have been put in it, would have held his arm stretched to the full ; but it was not high enough to do so by mine. The history reported to me of this device was, that if any of the guests failed to drink enough, or, when having drunk too much, they did not carry their liquor discreetly, they were confined to the wall by this handcuff, and, their arm thus extended, cold water was poured down the limb, in trickling fashion, till they fainted away. This was told me by the housekeeper ; but since she imparted the lore I have heard, or I have dreamed, another reason for the use of this instrument of torture, which I will faithfully render to my readers in another place. In the wainscot of the drawing-room, there also I found my shield in quarterings ; while the ceiling, which once had been carefully ornamented,

has been defaced with plaster and whitewash — no doubt in the days of the Reformation, though in what way the wise heads of the Reformists connected the devices on the ceiling with religious matters, for the life of me I could not divine. It is needless for me now to give a description of all the rooms I saw, the tale of true love which I contemplate relating; and the deed of outfang- and infang-thef executed by the King of the Peak, will necessitate rather a minute recurrence to many of the rooms within the Hall, as well as to the terraces without: therefore, in the hope that I have sufficiently interested the reader, male or female, to create a desire in them to follow me through a brief narration of some events about the end of Mary's reign, and the beginning of that of Elizabeth, I continue my story.

It was, then, a sultry and an airless, though lovely evening, that on which I sat down to dinner in the comfortable little parlour on the ground-floor, looking out upon the garden of the Peacock at Rowsley, and towards the river Derwent. The river, deep and cool under the overhanging banks where trees grow, rippled up over the shallows at the bridge. There its waters made

a soft and murmuring, and even a melancholy music to my ear ; which, after my inspection of tombs, bones, a human skull, antique antlers, horns, fossils, and deserted halls, fell, if freshly still, as though its notes were laden with a tearful weight, and did by the spirit as thunder-drops do when over-weighing summer flowers—it bowed down the lighter aspirations of my heart, and for a time it made my mind again to mourn. It does not suit “the man” to give way to sad reflections: if the heart grow cold, the spirit’s soul should warm it up ; and if a cloud essay to cling around reflection, then should nature’s thankfulness to God assume the sunlight of devotion, and drive away despair. In a frame of mind not absolutely sad, yet still sedately reflective, I sat down to my lonely dinner, and feeling that there was a species of comfort in every glass of sherry—alas! that I should be forced to admit that sometimes the sunny side of existence is contained in a glass of brandy and water—I applied rather frequently to my temperate bottle: a mere pint certainly comes within that denomination ; nor did I abstain from a second glass of pale ale. Men, when they are alone, will fall asleep directly after dinner ; perhaps it would be as well for some *têtes-à-tête* in the married line if they did *not* do so. However, as men cannot

be cross in their sleep, the action of the fact, one way or other, may be left to chance. I do not think that on this occasion I did go off to sleep ; if I did, it was but to a wakeful sort of slumber, and I remember, that in a declension of the head made by me I was somewhat suddenly brought up to the perpendicular by becoming aware of a strange sort of soft oozing sound, as if some kind of heavy, but not hard substance, was pushed against, or butting at, the diamond panes of the little window looking into the garden. It was something like the sound which a damp cloth would make under the hand of a housemaid when cleaning a window ; and yet it came too full and heavily for that : so much so, that on one of its pressures against the panes, the glass on the left-hand side the window as you look into the garden cracked, and I thought I heard a sort of phantom execration. This of course aroused me to clearer perception, when, on looking to the place, I beheld in the light of the summer night a head ; yes, decidedly the round, fat outline of a face and head beneath the shadow of what might once have been a hard, but now a very soft and crumpled hat, and I saw that the head was butting at the window. Mundane and dreamy imagination at once suggested a drunken man ; but I apprehended no un-

pleasant intrusion to the room on this score, on account of the upright iron bars of the window. It seemed, however, that I must have mistaken their width, for what seemed a very sufficient jolly head when outside the window, at last bobbed against the open casement, and, striking the bars, intruded itself slap into the room! My first impulse was to rise and hit it, but, ere I could take a step to give effect to my purpose, a rather good-humoured, but still strangely sepulchral tone of voice, exclaimed, "Don't hit me! No violence, my good master. I only came to do your honour service."

As the lips uttered these words, the very thick-set and lusty body, as it appeared outside, to my unspeakable astonishment squeezed itself after the head, through the very narrow bars, inside, and with a flourish of two very stout legs the figure came off the window-sill, and slipped down bodily on its feet upon the floor.

"How very tall you are, good master sir!" said the uninvited guest, eyeing me from head to foot from beneath the overhanging limp penthouse of his crumpled hat. "I heard you in the churchyard to-day, while your honour held some talk with our clerk as now is, about the good Knight, my master as was, and I made up my mind to have a look at you."

“Well,” I replied, “look then your fill. I never saw so big a terrier as you are get to ground in so small an earth.”

“Ah, my good master,” rejoined my strange guest, with what seemed to me to be a thrill of delight; “how it does rejoice my bones—I had nearly said marrow-bones, but that’s not *now* to the purpose—to hear your honour speak in sporting fashion! But don’t talk about ‘an earth.’ I knew you loved the chase, for I have heard you spoken of; and so I thought that, once in a way, I’d look into a room again, instead of taking my midnight walks among the woods, and tell your honour what you’d like to know.”

“What have you to tell me, then?” I replied. “If your tale is long, be seated, and help yourself out of the bottle or the jug, which you like best.”

“The bottle, your honour! My eyes are dusty, perhaps, but I don’t see it.”

“Not see it?” I returned. “Why, there it is, the next thing to your hand!”

“What, this here?” cried my visitor, who had now assumed a seat, grasping my pint of wine. “Ha, ha! this here leetle thing a bottle! ha, ha! And I suppose,” pointing to the ale-jug, “that there t’other spouted thing’s a pitcher! ha, ha! I craves your honour’s pardon, but if our old hunts-

man was here, how he would open out with me, and we'd have a jolly laugh together! Howsom-ever, he can't come, so there's no two ways about it."

My guest, or my supposed guest, having refreshed himself with wine, then seemed to await my further question; so I asked him who he was, and, to my utter astonishment, he replied as follows:—

"You went, sir, round our Hall to-day—I heard you say when you were in the churchyard that you would do so; and, no doubt, when in the dining-hall at the mansion you saw two pictures: one was of our old huntsman, with couples for hounds in his hand; and the other was your honour's servant, that's me. I was the deer-keeper, in charge of chase and manor, and it would have done your honour's heart good just to have seen the stags and bucks that fed in our glades. Not such stags and bucks as are at Chatsworth now, for sometimes of a moonlight night I goes to look at them, as, worse luck! there are none left here. Ours, and theirs too, *then* were twice as large as they be now. I wish to be fair, your honour, in speaking of a neighbour; but if you goes to Chatsworth afore you leaves Derbyshire in this the summer of 1563—I would say, 1863—you will see the deer worse there than they

really are ; for it having been my Lord Devonshire's—Duke he is now—resolve (it couldn't be his pleasure) to reduce his stock of deer, his steward took it in hand—as if a steward could know anything outside the buttery—and he goes and says to one Herring, a Lunnoner, ' You may take so many deer, all at so much a-head.' ' Yes, sir,' says the crafty Lunnoner ; ' and I'll catch 'em just after the rut.' ' So be it,' says the steward, without so much as consulting the deer-keeper. So down comes Master Herring when he knows as all the best bucks is very weak, and much easier caught than the younger ones and does, and he takes up all the valuable deer, and leaves my lord little for the next year's breed, and nothing to speak of for his table. A pretty good bargain for Master Herring, and a deuced bad 'un for my lord !”

At the conclusion of this speech the old deer-keeper, as he announced himself, took another chuckling grasp of my little bottle, smacked his lips, and looked at me again. It now struck me, that some strange chance had put at my disposal the very man I wanted, my purpose being to write a true legend, or anecdote, of old Haddon Hall ; so I at once led to the subject by remarking that “ he must have seen many a jolly day in his time, and been conversant, too, with that eventful era in re-

gard to the future destination of the family domains, when Sir John Manners first became enamoured of the only surviving daughter of Sir George Vernon, otherwise called 'the King of the Peak.' "

"Jolly days, sir!" remarked what must have been this very old man. "I *have* seen many on 'em, and to spare, or I should not have been at this here table now. If your honour would like to hear the story, I have yet time to tell it in; or if I haven't, I can call again to-morrow night."

"Go on then, my good friend," I rejoined; "take another pull at your glass, and I am all attention."

" 'A lady looks down from Haddon height,
O'er all men's hearts she's lordin';
Who harms a hair of her true love's head,
Makes a foe of Geordie Gordon.' "

So sings, or leastways did sing, our 'Old Ballad,' " continued the deer-keeper:—

"It was during the latter years of the reign of Queen Mary that the eldest daughter of Sir George Vernon, whom men called 'King of the Peak' in Derbyshire, died, and thus placed Dorothy, his surviving child, as sole apparent heiress of his wealth and wide domains, and mistress of his ancient Hall. Lord love you, sir! it would have done you good to have seen the feasting and drinking that there was in those

days; it was, indeed, 'merry in hall when beards wagged all;' and when Sir George and our young lady, Dorothy, sat on the dais, there was such a kindness in their glances down the tables, for the feasting-boards often stood as thick as they could be placed, that though good order was ever kept in their presence, every soul, from the guests to the steward and retainers, even to the lowest jack-scullion, felt as if they were at home in their own houses. From what I have heard people a-talking of in later days over my head, the feasting in Sir George's time was not like what it is now, any more than this here thimble (pointing to my pint bottle), and that there mug (pointing to the jug that held my pale ale), was like to our flagons, or black-jacks. Bless you, sir! the jacks that our two butlers used to carry—we had two: one for the strong-beer cellar and one for the small—to replenish the tables with, was, when full, as much as a man could lift; and even then right often were they fetched and carried to and fro! Mind you, I speak of days when there were guests; at other times, when none but the household were at dinner, there then was plenty, but no waste; and our young lady, taking a leaf out of her poor mother's book, who had been dead some years, used to look us all up, and

keep a good eye even to the kitchen. 'Tis like your honour may have heard that Sir Ralph de Vernon, one of the ancestors of this here family, lived to the age of 145 years; it's so set down upon the 'Book of Huvey,' folio 3, date 1306: but it's a fetch about that knight's age, and I know it, because in my time such things were nearer than they are now. True, he lived to a great age, and married a daughter of my Lord Dacres, and after that the widow of Master 'Jack Hatton;' but he didn't require all that time to do it in. Belike you know that 'Peyvere and Peverell, and Vere and Vernon,' came over when your honour's ancestor did, at the time of the Conquest, and that, like Harding did with the Saxon Berkeley, they married the native nobility, and got royal and territorial grants; and it was that that settled our family, the Vernons, in Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Your honour knows some of the Vernon lines of later date:—

‘A grisly boar, as raven's feather black,
Bred in that land Rollo had by his wife,
Past th' ocean, the Bastard's part to take,
Who Harold reft of kingdom and of life.’

You sees the boar on our arms, no doubt, with the quarterings and the crosses of your honour's shield; but as I have told you things beside the

mark of the tale you want, I'll just wet my lips again, and then to love and murder, for there's both in what I have to tell."

By this time my anxiety for the power of speech in my guest was excessive, for not only had he made frequent applications to the wine, but of late he had gone deep into the bosom of the jug of sufficient ale, and the tones of his voice, which were always hollow, or like those of a man with his lips to the larger end of a hunting-horn, and speaking through it, had become more indistinct, each word running into the next in a way that was doubly mysterious: so when in describing the fact that the hero and heroine of his discourse were, as he pronounced it, "sh-was-fond-of-seach-other," I suddenly resolved simply to listen to and catch any coherent sentence, but to write the continuous tale myself, which we must now defer to another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

A LEGEND OF OUR LIFE — THE POWER TO TAME TIMID CREATURES — NATURALISTS, NATURALS, AND FLATS.

As no opportunity has been afforded me to tame lions and tigers, as it is the fashion to call the reduction of those beasts into non-rendering or devouring behaviour, and as it likes me better to induce a little thing to love me than a gigantic brute to be afraid of me, my experience has been gathered among birds. I do not say dogs, because a dog is an already tamed and domestic animal, capable of some of the finest feelings in human nature, and able and ever willing to give man a lesson in many of the virtues, drawn even from the highest texts of Scripture.

When I see not only the writings of accepted naturalists of the bygone day, but books in the present day pretending to treat of the mysteries of creation, and of the instincts of beasts, birds, and fishes, and their habits, and the egregious blunders into which their writers, past and pre-

sent, more or less have fallen, I am inclined to review them all, and show some of the fallacies that now cumber the shelves of the British Museum,—records curious enough from their dates and errors, and usefully kept, perhaps chiefly to show the progress of science and literature.

We all know that when an author writes on any subject with opinions of his own, and facts to which he can attest, in direct opposition to long-accepted notions, that there arise at once hosts of people ready to revile, and, if they could, to ridicule all he says.

The lines by “*Tom Brown*” on “Dr. Burnet, bishop of Salisbury,” with a very little alteration, would suit some of the professors of the year of our Lord 1866–7, slightly altering the words of the last two lines :—

“ Here old *Sarum* lies,
As great as wise,
And learn’d as *Tom Aquinas* ;
Lawn sleeves he wore,
Yet knew no more
Of nature than *Socinus*.”

It is however idle to expose the faults of others, if they are dead, and as idle to attempt to contravene the opinions of the living, while with

the tenacity of life they cling to their own doctrines.

I select, therefore, simply to show what it has been in my power to do ; and if any other naturalist of my day has done, or can yet do, the same, why I will drink his health and hail him a jolly fellow !

In this our winter of 1866-7 many of my various kinds of wild-fowl have their wings at their command, and at that beautifully mysterious hour, known to all true sportsmen as “cockshut,” and by cockneys and townsmen as twilight, they seek their far-off feeding-places to welcome there, in the “foreign rides of fowl”—a term well known among decoy-men—and to locate their guests in the English waters, and thus bring them back, if they will come, to the fostering preservation of their own peculiar preserve. My flight of fowl is of the most varied kind, and each bird of which it consists is personally attached to me: they will follow me about at the specified times of feeding, morning and evening, so close and so devoid of all fear, that many of them will feed out of my hand, and even prevent my walking without great caution, from their assembling on and around my feet, and absolutely covering the ground around me.

Some of these fowl are hand-reared, some have been taken wild in various decoys, but all are tame, and more or less attached to me and to my keeper, and my servants and myself are the only people who ever feed them.

All creatures under the sun form their characters or their conduct through the force of example. Thus, the hound takes his bearing from his huntsman. If the huntsman is wild and noisy, so will the hound be; if he is cool, sensible, persevering, and resolute to work all day, rather than lose his fox, so will the hound fashion his nature accordingly, and "put his nose down" to the last.

And now as to bringing wild-fowl to live in this, what may be called, semi-domesticated state. Having been asked to describe the methods I adopt, they are very simple, and I proceed to lay them before my readers.

When ducks' eggs of any kind are put under a barn-door hen, great care must be taken each day that the hen is off for food to sprinkle the eggs slightly with tepid water. The reason for this is, that the eggs under their natural parent would receive this kind of moisture whenever she returned from her aquatic feeding-places to her nest; and, therefore, if this plan is not pursued, they become

too dry. Always, if possible, have all eggs, whether of water-fowl, pheasants, partridges, black-game, or grouse, nested on the ground. Birds of all kinds hatch better so; and not only that, suppose twelve young ones were hatched, twelve to each nest, one having been on the ground and the other in a fowl-house or on boards, the young that were hatched on the bosom of Mother Earth would be much stronger and better to do than those in the more artificial situation. When any of these fowl or game-birds are hatched, and put out with their foster-parent the hen, a crate should be put to the front of the coop, fitting close to the sides of the latter, whatever breadth it might be, and extend at least six or seven feet in length. The crate should be about a foot high, and the top of it be fitted either with a close-meshed net or a wire net, to prevent the young birds getting out, or other birds getting into them. The walls of the crate should not be higher than a foot, in order to let as much sun come to the brood as possible. If the brood should be of water-fowl, then, for the first ten days or fortnight, they should simply have an earthenware-dish, such as a good-sized flower-pot would stand in, filled from some pond, *not pump* water, and some short sweet grass thrown

into it for the little birds to wade among, and, if they liked, to eat it. A little fresh mould, or fine gravel or sand, should also be put into this dish; and the food of the birds should be at first "wild willow-weed seed," strewn on the water, grits and little red worms cut small, and raw bullock's or sheep's liver finely minced; and to this, as they get stronger, well-kept and well-scoured maggots, hempseed, and very thickly-mixed oat or barley-meal (I prefer the former), may be added.

When the young fowl begin to know their foster-mother, and to have overcome their terror at the hand that feeds them, then the crate may be drawn sufficiently away from the sides of the coop to let the young come forth on the grass to catch insects; and when they have become strong and less timid, then their coop, with the hen in it, may be moved to the water's side, and the young birds permitted to disport themselves in their natural element. When they retire for the night under the hen, a board should be fitted well to the front of the coop, and slates put beneath the coop all round, projecting a few inches within and without the coop, to prevent the entrance of vermin.

The most common as well as the worst of

vermin is the house-rat. I will be bound that the coop has not been put out by the waterside two days, ere some rat out for the summer, by what he regards as *his* seaside, has found it out. If, when the rat thus finds it, after the front of the coop is boarded up for the night a small light-going steel trap is set, so that the water lightly *but completely covers it*, just at the front of the coop, where the little ducks feed or go in and out, the vermin is sure to be taken.

If it is intended to pinion the wild-fowl, to do it effectually the wing must be taken off at the second joint from the body. It is useless to take off the extreme joint only at the end of the wing; for when the habit of body is in the humour to throw out the blood-feathers in the moult, the end of the wing, being not much more than gristle, will grow again, and a second operation, if you can then catch the bird, becomes necessary.

The safest time to pinion birds is *at the moment* all their feathers have completed the first moult, and become thoroughly dry at their base. If not pinioned then, the termination of the second moult must be waited for, when the bird has assumed the adult plumage. If on finding, in the first instance, that you have not

caught the bird just at the right time, then, to prevent his flying away (offended, perhaps, at being caught), clip with a scissors that portion of the feathers in the wing that have become hard, and wait till all are hardened to completely pinion him. Use a sharp penknife, not scissors, and sever the joint in the midst, taking out a portion of the joint, and restore the bird at once to the water; and these things attended to, there is no danger to be apprehended from the operation.

If a bird is in moult at the time of pinioning, so great is the determination of blood to the skin and to the extremities, that, on the joint of the wing being severed, he is certain to bleed to death. Frost also should be avoided for this operation, as the wound is sure to be affected by it, and perhaps to mortify. In approaching wild-fowl while in this same tame state, all haste or sudden appearances should be avoided; and the person who feeds them should always try to be in the same, or a dress similar to the one he at first wore, when they began to notice him.

If you want to increase your power over the birds you should, in the first instance, let them see you in a gaudy-coloured coat, as much unlike the common patterns as possible, and always wear

it when you go to feed them. I discovered this while keeping my stag-hounds at Cranford. One morning the pheasants in what was called the "Churchyard Cover" not having been fed, I went in my orange plush frock, or "tawny coat," as the ancients defined it when the hounds of my family were kept at "Charing Cross," or at the then "village of Charing," and attended by "thirty huntsmen in tawny coats," and fed as I was wont to do when in my shooting-jacket. This bright appearance was never forgotten by the pheasants, and, whether they had been fed or not, they always recollected the colour and connected it with food, and as I walked from the mansion down to the kennel on the mornings of hunting every pheasant in the cover followed me, and stood in the bushes near to or round the kennel-door.

I remember when the *Field* newspaper was at its best, a correspondent addressing the then Editor, and asking him if he could account for the state of some hawks he had in training. He left them quite good to his "fist," and tame, and, leaving them so, went out for a few days' pleasure. On returning home the first thing he did was *to rush to his hawks*, to see how they had been cared for, when, to his astonishment and dismay, to him they evinced the utmost wildness, were scared at

his approach, and were then and there quite intractable. Had I thought it worth my while to answer his query, I should have suggested less haste in his approach after an absence, and a change in his irresistible or pleasure-seeking garments to the attire of the old shooting-jacket and that in which it had been his custom to attend his birds. The hawks would then have recognised their friend, and, if they had been fond of him in that attire, evinced much pleasure at his return.

It is often astonishing to me how men pass over apparently little things, which little cheap things are really the keystone to success, and only grasp at costly ones, because they impress their minds from the trouble they occasion. Thus I have had fowl from foreign countries sent to me, every care being taken of them as to corn, but a little fine sand or gravel utterly unthought of; in which cheap thing was centred all the chances of a healthful existence, and the delivery to me of them alive. In the same way men let the eggs of fowl remain on their table till they have enough for a sitting, kept perhaps in cotton, or some dry material, and never sprinkled with a little water, and never turned. Instead of this, there should be a little water applied to the eggs every day, and each egg should be completely and carefully turned

by the hand, so that it should never lie for twenty-four hours on the same side. If left in one position, the bird in hatching will be found stuck to the shell, and unable to get rid of the incumbrance. To plunge the egg then in warm—very warm, but not too hot—water, will sometimes effectually lucubrate the error, but in nine cases out of ten the callow bird so adhered to the shell will die.

The bird that I have taken immense pains with, in an attempt to tame him, or, by hand-rearing, to give him a local attachment to the spot, is the blackcock. If pinioned and at large in a walled garden he will become very tame, but then in that situation there is one thing absolutely fatal to his continued existence, and that is the growth of fruit in the garden, whether it be of standard plums or apples, or of wall-fruit.

However amply the blackcock may be fed with oats and Indian corn, boiled rice and thickly-kneaded meal, still there is something in the way of food that he wants and you cannot give him; for, do what you will, he will swallow all the small, blighted, bullet-like little apples that fall in his way, and the same by the little blighted peaches, nectarines, and apricots, and thus what we call indigestibly “crop-set” himself, and consequently die.

I cannot say that I have entirely failed to induce greater trust in man in this beautiful game-bird, for there is an old wild native of my heaths that comes on my little lawn, sits on the garden wall, and in spring “curls” with some of his fellows near my house, and does his best to drive all the cock pheasants away. Not one pheasant can withstand his assault, or the fury of his appearance when his tail is up, fan-like, completely over his back, and the long curled black feathers on either side of it exalted on either side his face, ornamented by the bright red upstanding fringe above his eyelids. While he does this he stamps like the male prairie-grouse, or as the turkey does when he is making a fool of himself in the farmyard; and, as far as I can learn, like a Chinese soldier he relies more on his noise and looks as against an enemy than in the danger arising from his blows.

The male prairie-grouse—these birds have bred with me—follow his fashion in war, and the noise, or howling, they make resembles the same in a bloodhound, and quite as loud. On either side their neck they inflate, when the skin is bare, two brilliantly-hued vermilion and orange globes, the size of an orange: these globes push up or excite the long “pennated” plume that is on either side, descending from beneath the cheeks; and

these feathers, so supported, stand up perfectly erect like horns. When the male bird howls he stops and stoops his head, with bill close to the ground, and by a great effort he produces this kind of hollow howl by forcing his breath through these large globes, but unless the globes are full to their utmost extent he does not indulge in any sound at all.

There is nothing more curious than to see that most lovely plumaged bird, the American wood-drake, who is susceptible of being made very tame, endeavour to induce the common duck to pair with him. He is the gentlest and most graceful of all the duck-lovers I ever saw, and by continuous and the most worshipping assiduity he makes an impression on his mistress, totally at variance with her common nature. Unlike the common drake, he enters into no unseemly scramble with her for the bit of bread or kneaded meal, but he invites her to partake of it as the barn-door cock does the hen; and if he be pestered by the presence of the more vulgarly intrusive ducks and drakes, he will seize the morsel out of their way, and, carrying safe off in his bill, call to his duck to come and take it. His efforts to keep her from the flock and to get her to himself are beautiful. If she swims towards any other bird he glides before her, making a whis-

pering sort of whistle, gets in her way, and with his beautiful breast steers her through the water, as far as he can from surrounding contamination. He heads her at every turn, and at last teaches his duck to understand and love him.

You will not succeed though in effecting this cross, unless you can confine the wood-drake with the common duck in an aviary, because the more violent drakes of the duck's own kind will at last enforce a separation, and like the gipsy girl, if decoyed away from her camp by a well-dressed suitor, there is always a latent hankering to go back to the more squalid alliance.

There is another difficulty with these birds, too: the wood-drake will only love where his mind directs; it is not in human power to pair him against his will, and he will only love at his own free choice from a flock where the fowls are all at large together, and he is free to choose. It is not always possible at the right moment to catch the pair thus associated, and if you catch him and then put him in an aviary with a duck as much resembling his love as it is for one bird to resemble another, he will have nothing to say to her; but sit on the bank melancholy and brooding over the loss his bosom has sustained.

If, on the other hand, he is left at large, then

the common drakes will beat him and drive him off; and his fickle fair one, approving of the best warrior, sails away and leaves the graceful suitor in the lurch—a fact I have seen happen in regard to men and women.

Our “lives” in our country-houses are oftentimes more curious and illustrative than the vulgar world is apt to believe. The old vulgar saying, “Oh, he is a man who can think of nothing but horses and dogs!” is really but seldom applicable to the country gentleman, or noble lord at his castle, mansion, or hall. We hunt, we shoot, we love our horses, hounds, and dogs, our woods and waters, and our fields; they are the agreeable adjuncts and recreations of our lives: but this attachment to field sports does not unfit us for the graver and wider pursuits and duties of life, nor do they in any way brutalize our nature, or unfit us to admire and cultivate every more gentle accomplishment under the sun. Our tenantry and the labouring poor, by our residence among them, obtain our friendship and our care; and every educated and thinking mind must derive a greater benefit from constant communion with the book of nature, and the works—the wide, the wild, the beautiful, and unfettered and inscrutable works—of God.

“Our legends and our lives” will bear research, and have stood, and will stand the test of ages, in spite of all the noisy, selfish, hollow demagogues, who from time to time “spawn” their speeches,

“And demand a praise.”

In times of injustice, tyranny and distress, the baron’s sword has leaped from its scabbard in the people’s cause—Runnymede still tells the tale; and when famine assails the labouring poor, what hands go more lavishly deep into their pockets than those of the undoubted nobility and gentry of the United Kingdom ?

CHAPTER IV.

GHOST STORIES—THE LIVING AND THE DEAD—THE BLUE DRESSING-ROOM—A GHOST IN WALES—A MURDER IN SCOTLAND—MR. STRACHAN—HELEN BELL AND STRANGE DEEDS.

IN referring to Ghost Stories, and telling “anecdotes” of the ancestral predecessors of “the Upper Ten Thousand,” I know that I have a very delicate task to perform, governed as I am by the sincere desire to hurt no one’s feelings.

In writing anecdotes of the living or the dead the same delicacy ought to rule the writer’s pen, for the dead cannot contradict ; their memory, too, *ought* to be revered ; and in addition to this, there may be those yet in existence who might be compromised or annoyed if the tale were *bad or sad*.

It is strange, but “up” in ghost stories as I am, take all those I know, and the majority of re-visitations by souls to this world—for of course they must be souls, having left the earth and their bodies at the same time—are connected in some

degree or other with avarice, or at least with the love of money, and very often with a desire to arrange their hair. There is a house, I will not say in what county, though its mistress is very beautiful, and there is in that house a room called “the Blue Dressing-room,” (there are blue rooms, and yellow rooms, and red rooms, in nearly all old mansions, so the colour mentioned leads to nothing,) that is haunted by a ghost — by a soul about whose parting from this world, as well as with his estate, there are told wild stories. . No servant will sleep in this room, and when I ask what appearance has ever been seen in the room by a credible witness, I am told that “*the* old gentleman” (the monosyllable “the” does not mean the devil, but a former possessor of the estate) comes to this room as soon as it is dark, and, in commemoration of the supposed violence done to him, or to his wishes, “stands before the looking-glass and *brushes his hair!*”

Well, this *is* an odd idea, this double reason for the return to this life of an unhappy soul, being gold, and vanity as to looks, illustrated by the assertion that he was coerced in leaving the former ; and at the age at which he died, he must be deemed to have been not over-sedulous as to the latter, viz. his personal appearance.

In another instance a lady of large property married when she was old. I take it her riches came not to her at an early period of life—a supposition sufficiently accounting for prolonged celibacy ; and having expectant heirs, when she died a will was found leaving every sixpence and fraction of money and estate to her lawyer and his son. The mansion where this happened was an old, rambling, ill-built house, situated in a hollow at the foot of a high hill densely wooded, and was close to the sea-shore.

Soon after the old lady's death and the declaration of the most unlooked-for will, a rumour got abroad that her soul haunted both the house and grounds; and for a soul who had come to years of discretion I must say the farmers, domestics, and labouring people, gave unto her the most strange cantrips. Even strangers passing the lodge gates swore that they saw a little old lady in evening dress, who bolted out suddenly on purpose to scare their horses ; and all farmers who arrived late from the market-town excused themselves by assuring their dames that they had “not stayed out drinking,” and that whatever change in their method of speech the dame observed was not the gin-and-water, but “sh-fright, for shey'd been carried over hedges-sh-fields

by sh'old ooman, and left in sh' brook or sh' ditch."

Now if this ghost had confined herself to carrying off farmers, frightening strangers, and even ducking the lawyer who was the supposed cause of her restlessness, no one would have cared: but connected with her presence there seemed a curse upon the son and daughters who benefited by the will; and the sins of the father, if any, were in this case assuredly visited on the children.

The two daughters had been nice, pretty girls: one had an accident and injured her figure, the other became insane; while the old ghost, not content with these misfortunes, haunted the house and grounds as briskly and continuously as ever, visiting the bed-rooms of all guests, and frightening everybody out of their senses. The father and mother—that is, the lawyer and his wife—died; the estate came to the son, who married excellently well; but as he could not exorcise the ghost, it was resolved to pull down the old house and build a new one in its stead.

And now comes the strangest part of the tale, backed as it is by the architect who built the new house, and who came to sleep in it to await the arrival of, and to receive his employers when they

came home from abroad. The tale he told was this. Having retired to bed early, and stirred the fire before he sought his pillow, the fire continued for some time to throw a distinct light over the apartment, when suddenly he saw plainly confessed before him, and standing on the hearth-rug, the figure of a little old lady. At first he thought it might be the new housekeeper, for all the servants had been newly hired, and that she was ignorant of which room he slept in; so, by way of a modest signal, he coughed loud enough to have made any housekeeper aware of the male presence. It had no effect; the intruder did not even turn her head; and by this time he had had leisure to observe that the dress of the figure before him was immensely antiquated; and for a man in a terrible fright I must say he was a close observer, for he thus depicted her attire. She wore a short flowered kind of tunic over a white petticoat, the sleeves fitting close to the arm as far as the elbow, and terminated by deep lace ruffles: the arm, therefore, from elbow to hand, bare, and disclosing to his horrified view the most brown, shrivelled, weird, and wizened limb imaginable.

The narrator of this declared, that while he looked on this apparition there was an in-

describable dread upon him, and a cold shudder up his back, which he had never known before or since. So terrified was he, though he declared that he was in no way nervous, that instead of accosting the old lady he seized the bell at the bed's head, and rang such a continuous peal that every servant in the house came tumbling into his room together; and when he looked for the old lady she had disappeared, not by the door, because to get to it she must have passed him, but by some means only dispensed to wandering spirits. On telling the servants why he rang the bell, each and every one exclaimed, "The ghost! the ghost!" In this instance, then, pulling down the old house and building a new one did not lay the ghost, though it caused the outlay of a considerable sum of money; and, as far as I know, the old lady has it all her own way to this hour.

CRAIGEROOK CASTLE, N. B.

It is strange, when we look through the legends of former years, to find that not only is the gloomy month of November famed for its murky atmosphere and the lugubrious shadow of its dark and gloomy days, but as if to add to its horrors, or perhaps induced by weather so

much in accordance with the commission of crime, men's hearts seem to fraternise with the forms on the shrouded face of the world, and to seek, even in the daily darkness, an opportunity for the commission of deeds they would shrink from before the rays of an unclouded sun.

It was on a dark day, a week previous to the 3rd of November, 1707, that Helen Bell, the house-keeper of Mr. Strachan, in the house of that gentleman in Edinburgh hospitably entertained as her friends two men, "William Thomson, wright," and "John Robertson, smith," with all the comforts that her position enabled her to set before them. Little did she think, that all the time they were professing their admiration for such personal charms as she possessed, and partaking of her hospitable cheer, that in truth they were but humouring her vanity, so that they might gain time in which to compass, and a scene wherein to enact, her untimely death. Yet so it was; so such deception has ever been, and so it will be again. The villains traded in woman's vanity, in order to fulfil the impious and horrible designs of their own depraved and hellish dispositions. In the company of their intended victim, in Mr. Strachan's house in Edinburgh, these monsters in crime revelled; the idea of rendering that hand life-

less and cold, which then warm and kindly poured out for them the foaming tankard or the inspiriting spirit, now entered their desperate thoughts: bent on getting money, and capable of any deed, these men flattered and cajoled their victim till, in the openness of her unsuspecting discourse, she had told them on the Saturday that on the following Monday, the 3rd of November, 1707, she should proceed to Craigerook Castle in possession, among other things, of a sum of money. As if by accident, at five on that Monday morning, these men fell in with her near the Well Bow, and announced that they were going a part of the way in the same direction as herself. Pleased with their company, and unsuspecting, unapprehensive of any mischief, at their solicitations of being of service to her she gave to Thomson two bottles and the key of her master's castle to carry, and to Robertson she assigned something else. Thus they proceeded in approved good fellowship till they came below the Castle, when one of them threw her down on the steps, the other at the same time striking her with a hammer; when, having murdered and robbed their victim, the keys of the entrance-door in their possession, they hastened on to plunder the premises thus rendered up to pillage.

On reaching the Castle they opened the outer door with the key already in their possession, lit a candle at the kitchen-fire, which yet held a few embers, and then, either with a crowbar or the poker, "prized" the study door, broke open a chest and possessed themselves of eight bags containing money, besides a purse of gold, leaving, through accident or oversight, two other bags in the chest, also containing cash. Of the eight bags thus stolen Thomson carried six, as well as the purse of gold, and Robertson the other two bags, one of which contained a hundred pounds. As soon as the robbery was completed, Robertson suggested that they should gather together all the tow they could find, as well as the linen and bed-clothes, and carrying them into a back room set the house on fire, as a means of concealing their crime ; but, strange to say, though at that moment red-handed in the terrible fact of murder, and stained with the blood of woman, Thomson refused to comply with the suggested incendiarism, saying that "he had done wickedness enough already, and was resolved not to burden his soul with any more." In this resolve he persisted, though Robertson threatened to murder him for his faint-heartedness. Now it is almost impossible to conceive that a villain so steeped in the most

hideous crime as Thomson was, could have had any qualms of conscience and scruples unless through some heavenly interposition, or reservation of circumstances that might lead to future detection : but so it was; Thomson persisted in his refusal, and Robertson did not put his threat of a second murder into execution. Leaving the house in company, as they returned together through the Grass Market they mutually swore to each other to assign their bodies as well as their souls to the devil, if ever they should impeach or tell upon each other in the event of being apprehended. Robertson, the most daring of the two, then and there at once proposed that this impious engagement of theirs should be engrossed in a solemn bond signed in blood, and made, as far as men could make it, indissoluble in its terrible provisions. There seemed however, according to tradition, to be other ears than theirs listening to the proposal, for no sooner was the suggestion uttered by Robertson than the villains were alike startled, Thomson terrified and Robertson nearly shaken from his hardihood, by the sudden appearance of a strange man right betwixt them; and thus, in the middle of the Bow, that stranger spoke:—"I'll witness the compact, and write out the bond here at once, if you will sign it with a pen *dipped in the*

blood of both.” In a moment Robertson, cloaking his fears perhaps with an amount of bravado, exclaimed, “Done with you, my hearty! Where’s your pen? the ink you want is here!” his fist doubled, and the finger of the other hand pointing to his nose. But Thomson was overwhelmed in terror; he could not go any further step by step in miserable crime. Already he was confounded by the guilt he had helped to do, and cowed by a murderer’s fears. “No,” he cried, “I cannot, will not do it! But who are you that have thus become a witness against us? Your name! your name!”

“I am no witness against you,” replied the stranger, whom neither of the murderers had ever seen before; “*at least, not now*: my name you will one day learn. What I know I shall perhaps make use of in another place: till then, farewell, farewell, and *keep your blood till wanted.*” The murderers stared on the spot between them, where but now loomed the dark form of the stranger: but they stood alone, the form had disappeared.

For weeks the perpetrators of this atrocious deed remained undiscovered; but, strange to say, a scrap of dirty paper, bearing the name of “Thomson,” was found on the premises that had been robbed, and that slight vestige of evidence—for there were thousands of the name of Thomson—

which fire would have consumed had Robertson's desire to burn the house been complied with, led to Thomson's apprehension. Still nervous, still shaken to the very centre of his existence, in the vain hope of saving his wretched life, Thomson made a voluntary confession, turned evidence, and impeached his companion; and thus they were both apprehended and eventually brought to execution.

In all the ghostly legends that I have gathered, it seems that the most restless of all spirits is the spirit of a defunct housekeeper. Whether murdered or not, in life happy or unhappy, the ghost that renders night hideous, and tapestried rooms and staircases horrible, is sure to be an *old* housekeeper: it is never a young and pretty one, nor one in a modern dress; very seldom a butler; and never, that I can discover, the spirit of a liveried flunkey or footman. It is strange all this, and impossible to be accounted for; but as a faithful historian I feel myself constrained to be as near the truth as possible. The form of poor Helen Bell is still said to haunt the Castle of Craigerook, but why or wherefore it should be permitted to do so I am not ghost-seer enough to determine.

CHAPTER V.

PRESENCE OF MIND, IN LOVE AND MONEY.

DURING my life I have often had to admire presence of mind in women, and sometimes in men ; but on the occasion to which I am now about to allude, man alone showed presence of mind, in both love and money.

Let the reader, or let that infinitely more charming creature the readeress, imagine a girl of enchanting appearance,—not a lady of “dashing exterior, dressed in the height of fashion,” as we sometimes see a female described in the daily prints, whose hand, in an omnibus, has been caught in some sister-traveller’s pocket, hold of her purse ; or who, in spite of the caution passed among the counter-skippers in a haberdasher’s shop of “two[^]ten\$,” has put into her muff, “quite promiscuously,” a piece of silk, for which she *forgot* to pay. No, gentle reader ; not

a flaunting female of “*imposing* appearance,” but a handsome, nice, quiet girl, of rather retiring demeanour, who, in addition to her graceful looks and gentle mind, was possessed in her own right of a considerable fortune. Of course, for happiness so nice and comfortable, many suitors were on the *qui vive*, and many were refused: one only seemed to have made any impression and to have cut out the rest, and he was a man considerably her senior, with what was deemed to be a beautiful and luxuriant head of black hair. This fortunate suitor was very careful of his appearance, and was reputed to have had considerable success among the fair sex. A sensible girl, the thought had struck her that in this lover she had found a steady, as well as a well-dressed and good-looking man; no butterfly folly about him, no wandering wish to rove from flower to flower, no valentine desire for a pair in February and a separation in August: but here she thought she saw a man with whom in every way she could be happy, so she accepted his offer, and they were married, her trustees only showing a piece of low vulgarity by covenanting that her fortune was to remain in her possession, her husband having nothing more than a life-interest in the annual income. Of course her lover cared not for money:

oh, no! not a bit! lovers always swear they never do; and I knew one who wooed a lady who, he felt convinced, was very rich, because all the world said so, who, in order to be sure of getting her, and to show his disinterestedness, when it was suggested to him by her parents that before the affair came off he should see what they would have to live on, replied, "Oh, no! money is of no moment to me; let her keep it all: my only object is her hand."

They were married, and then the generous suitor found she scarce brought him a hundred pounds a-year; on which he went and upbraided her belongings, who coolly replied, "*We asked you* to see her fortune; but you said you did not wish to do so, for money was not your object."

I also know a pretty little woman—at least, she was then very pretty—who married a snob, whose father had made, or was supposed to have made, a good deal of money by trade. The snob married her, because he also supposed her to be rich. Both were deceived, for neither had anything; and hating each other they never, what is called, "hit it off."

But to return to the heroine of my tale; though her hero would have liked to have been able to touch both principal and interest, as he could not

do so he just took all he could get, and I must say they lived very happily together. In short, they might have been claimants for the “fitch of bacon,” but for one little stumbling-block to perpetual and unbroken happiness and good humour. He was attached to the turf; he would wager on the great events, as many fools do who know nothing about them; and he was very often coming to his wife to “just advance him a trifle more to pay a debt of honour: a debt of honour, you *know*, my dear—a *debt of honour!*”

These debts of honour she very soon dishonoured, for, like a sensible girl, she quickly saw that the more *she* gave the more *he* wanted; and, strange to say, if he won he never gave her back anything: so the long and the short of it was, she kindly but peremptorily refused his last request for the heaviest sum he had ever previously applied for, and no wheedling on his part could decoy her from her just resolution. The honeymoon had been long over, and the pair had settled down to their quiet home and sane behaviour. A Derby-day had then just concluded; the husband looked a little careworn and anxious, but as she knew that Epsom, in all probability, was the cause of the cloud, she cared not to ask him the reason why. He had been obliged, therefore, to promote the

usual request, but all in vain; namely, the means to discharge a debt of honour—"But, my love, a debt of honour!" for there was no other proceeding left to him, as she would in no way lead up to the matter that weighed so heavily on his mind.

Now this was not only a very pretty, but a very sensible young lady; for though she found it to be for her good, as well as his, to stop the supplies on the gambling account, in all other things she was as kind to him and as liberal as ever; and the harmony of their wedded life was in no way seriously interrupted. There was just as much romping, tickling, and kissing as ever—when they were alone, of course; and perhaps rather more: for in all probability he still had in view a chance to overcome her reluctance—"this last time, of course!"—to advance him a considerable sum.

My readers will do me the kindness to remember that an author has, to some extent, an Asmodean power to unroof houses, open bosoms, and uplift skulls, to see what house, heart, and brain contain: and all this for the benefit of the community and his publisher: so if with confidence I narrate this tale, it is because an occult power aids me to the truth.

Well, on the memorable evening that preceded

the night to which I am about to allude, the lovers — for though some married men may cry out the well-known and inestimable name of “Walker!” they were still lovers, though they had been married nearly two years—had dined *tête-à-tête*, and were whiling away the hours before bedtime with a little innocent romping. She as often sat on her lord’s knee as on a chair; visited his most assailable places to tickling, touched him under the arms, on the ribs, and just above the hip; but though digitary applications to these spots used to make him succumb, in tender fits of mirth, to her power, on this occasion he was passive certainly, but moodily flinching, instead of merrily laughing, and at times with a solemn sigh he uttered, “Don’t, my dear; I cannot bear it; I am out of spirits, or unwell.”

Perhaps it would be right again to repeat, that before marriage he had been what people term rather a fast man in dress, in love, in perfumery, and greatly in that exceedingly nourishing condiment for the hair, Douglas’s Promethean Balm. It was to this latter fact that his splendid head of black hair was assigned. He always betted a good deal more than he had in his pocket, which a wise man never does; the Derby, the Oaks, the “Two Thou.,” as it is called in racing vulgarity, always

hit him; for, somehow or other, he could never get upon the right horse, and often made a book which, when analysed, made him stand *to lose on everything*. No wonder then that at first he applied to the wife of his bosom for the means to pay,—“A debt of honour, my dear; a debt of honour, you know!” and that at first she complied, but in this last instance, and for a heavier sum than ever, she mildly but firmly had refused.

It was, then, subsequently to this last refusal, after a romping evening, in which he saw no chance of altering her steadfast resolve, and during which he had come off the worst in the tickling match, that they retired to their bed, and therein he soon fell into a sleep even more sound than usual, for his mind had been dwelling on his impossibility to pay, and had wearied him to a most unusual extent. Of course he couldn't go to bed without his head; so deep in the snowy pillow lay that splendid lot of black hair, curled and curling around his temples as thick as ever, and ready at any moment for his wife's admiration; and, to tell the truth, she was fond of looking at it, though, on the score of not being able to bear tickling about the head, he contrived always to divert her playful hands from the seat of reason. Fast asleep they had both gone, her cheek close to his, a locket of

that black hair still resting on her bosom, her last thought the triumphs of Douglas's Promethean Balm. Sound asleep as he had fallen, no doubt his dreams had disturbed him, as the sequel will show; but her dreams were all of joy. Sweet, little, round-headed babies, with dots of the letter *i* for eyes in their cherub cheeks, but without wings, all dressed in long, shapeless, sack-like, snowy garments, stretched out their little fat hands and bleated a kind of noise, which the nurses swore meant mamma; but suddenly one of their heads dropped off—the head that had the darkest hair of all, and its fall, or imagined fall, scared her from sleep, and set her bolt upright in bed. And, gracious powers! what did she see on the pillow at her side, where she expected to find the flowing, glossy locks, whose likeness was to be handed down in “little ones,” and perpetuated for ever? She saw a bald, polished skull, without the vestige of a hair on it—a ghastly spectacle of a turnip, still possessed of eyes and nose she thought she knew. Or might it not be the head of a designing villain? It was too much for her; so, sitting up transfixed by the sight, she uttered a frantic shriek.

Horses, jockeys, judges, whips, winning-post and distance, legs and books, took to flight from the vexed mind of the dreamer, now suddenly

awakened; and our betting friend, turning his head, felt a cold sensation about his brows, and beheld his better half bolt upright by his side, and gazing down on him with horror.

Presence of mind, in love and money: here, then, was an example of it. Quick as thought he felt his loss, and knew what scared his wife. His hand, with the speed of lightning, grasped a something that was close to his head, but just beneath the bed-clothes, and with a convulsive motion of his arm he dropped it, sprang like a lunatic to the floor, and kicked it under the bed; and then, with a hand on his bare skull, and a piteously-resigned but forgiving look at his wife, he moaned,—“ And is it come to this? My power to bear my misery unscathed has failed, and I am made a miserable object for the rest of my weary life! Inability to pay my debt of honour has settled on my brain, and every hair I had has suddenly fallen off!” Then, sinking on his knees, he hid his face on the coverlet of the bed, and seemed to weep in anguish.

In an instant the believing, the affectionate girl, had clasped him in her arms. Wracked with remorse for the injury she had done him she prayed his forgiveness, and bade him take enough for the debt, and fifty times more, by way of

an atonement for her cruel sin. For some time nothing seemed to pacify him, but at last he yielded to her entreaties, and had the money he desired—and a little more.

By one excuse or other, and by saying he had dropped his purse or lost his handkerchief, while she resumed her couch, he contrived to get the first look under the bed, and got unseen possession of his wig; and then came a playful contest as to whether he should have a wig made or not. She insisted on it; while he, remembering that

“The beggar who is bald, you know,
Doth challenge double pity,”

or a couplet something like it, was desirous of going bare. At last he yielded, and after pretending to go to a hairdresser, one day he returned with a wig so like “his hair”—not the least doubt of the exact likeness, because it was that which *had* fallen from his head—that his dear, little, lovely, sensible wife, screamed with pleasure when she saw him look as he looked when first he asked her hand.

CHAPTER VI.

RETRIEVERS, SETTERS, AND POINTERS, AND DOG-BREAKING.

SINCE the loss of my long-tried friend, and old favourite retriever, " Brutus," I have been looking everywhere to find some intelligent active young dog to take his place. So far as the duties attached to it go, his place in my affectionate remembrance cannot so readily be filled up. An old, or what is called a thoroughly-broken retriever, I did not desire ; because, ten to one but I should have had as much to unlearn him from as to learn him : for men, masters and keepers, have some very odd ideas about what a retriever should do, from many of which I dissent *in toto*.

There are what I call automaton retrievers, and there are real retrievers, who only work when they think that something is really lost, and on purpose to recover whatever is lost, and to bring it to their masters.

The automaton dog is one who picks up by eye, or who hunts for anything by his master's voice or hand alone, and not of his own knowledge or by his nose. The automaton dog has been used to bring gloves, sticks, hats, or handkerchiefs, or to swim into the water after impossible-to-be-retrieved stones.

The real retriever ought never to have been sent to fetch any imperishable thing ; he ought only to have had fur and feathered things in his mouth, alive or dead, which he had learned to know would be spoiled if he bit them too hard. I have had retrievers who would not bring game, if there was no obstacle between me and the thing that was killed ; who would look at the fallen bird, hare, or rabbit, and say, as plain as a dog could say, " There's your game—no difficulty about it ; pick it up yourself." On the contrary, if whatever was killed fell into water, or the other side of water, or into a wood, or the other side of a wall or hedge, then the sensible dog, thinking that his master could not get it without his aid, would hasten at once to recover it, and bring it to the bag. I have known a dog mark a wounded pheasant, that flew a considerable distance, when, as other pheasants were falling, he remained at my heels, ready to work through all the immediate fun,

but in perfect remembrance of the distant and probably dead bird. When we beat the cover out, and the word "All out !" was given, then, without being told to do so, he absented himself, went to the spot he had marked half an hour before, and returned with the dead bird.

Now that *is thought*, and industry of the brain as well as nose ; and it is to these reasoning qualities that we should address ourselves when educating a retriever.

I have known my dogs, who have been used to be at my heels summer and winter among the game, absolutely rebuke me by their looks when I shot a white rabbit ; and though "Wolf" went over the fence in expectation of a rabbit, on coming to the colour which he had seen was never shot at, and as to which he had received a caution not to hunt, he regarded me with a look of sorrowful surprise, and refused to touch the thing that I had sent him for. The same dog, on my lawn at Teffont, in Wiltshire, was sent by me to hunt a rabbit out of a circular flower-bed, a long way from any of the coops where pheasants were being reared by hand. He went a little way in, but returned at once to my heels, looking very sheepish, and refused to hunt it out. I saw at once that there was some reason for this refusal:

I knew it by his look and manner, so went to see what it was. There was a lot of the earliest young pheasants there ; he had often lain by my gun among them, and seen them fed, and knew that they were never to be disturbed ; and hence his refusal to go near them after the rabbit.

The same, only a year ago (1865), with poor old "Brutus." A young cock pheasant had been caught in a vermin-trap, and had left a leg behind him. I happened to see this fine young cock bird in full plumage the next day, away from all other game, and shot him. At a sign "Brutus" jumped the fence, and ran up to the bird, not dead, but hit in the head and fluttering strongly about the ground. The instant he saw that it was a pheasant, on land where he had seen them reared and taken care of, he let fall his stern, and stood and gazed at me with a mournful expression in his eyes, not attempting to touch the bird, but evidently hurt at what he thought an accident. On being assured by me that I wished for the bird, he brought it ; but in so tender and remarkable a manner, so unlike the proud way he used to bring things that had fallen to the gun, that it was perfectly evident that he thought the bird was wanted in an endeavour to save its life. My famous "Smoker" would not follow a winged

and running pheasant into the corner of a wood at Cranford, where there was a great deal of game that had not yet risen. So that my brother-sportsmen by these instances will see, that dogs have only to be sensibly treated to become as sensible, or more so, than some of their masters ; and there is just as much difference in the really good retriever and the automaton fetch-and-carry dog, as there is between a fool and a sensible man.

Perhaps among the most ignorant things done, and that, too, by men whose lives have been passed among game and dogs, is the one of taking a retriever up to the spot on which a bird had fallen, and then the man not being able to pick up the bird himself, will call the dog back fifty times if he goes on elsewhere to look for it. And that, too, on ground on which, if the dead bird had been there, there was no reason why the man should not see it and pick it up. Often have I been so enraged at this ignorance, that, whether they have been my servants or those of other people, I have exclaimed on seeing them call the dog back, "Let him alone, you fool ! If the bird was there, you 'd see it ; if the bird is not there, he must have run on ; and how the devil can the dog retrieve it, unless you

let him alone? He must know better than you do what he is about, because on such an occasion his nose is better than your eyes or head."

There is another point that few keepers ever think sufficiently of, and that is, which way the wind blows. Unless your setters and pointers are beautifully broken, and have been most sagaciously used, you must beat up wind, or a moderate dog, whose knowledge is not extreme, will run up his game. A first-rate dog, such as has several times been in my possession, the instant he touches the usings or foot of game which he knows to be down wind of him, will at once stop, and of his own accord change the circuit of his line, and put himself down wind instead of up wind of the covey of partridges or pack of grouse, and if he finds that they are running from the gun he will get a-head of them, and pin them between him and his master. This is a most beautiful thing to see, and to my mind is the perfection of that sort of sport. A well-broken, sensible dog, should range wide and right in front of the gun, crossing the line of the gun backwards and forwards, and leaving no part of the lands untried. Each dog, when a brace is on range, should, of their own perception, avoid each other's line, and each be

bent on beating the ground unoccupied by the other.

It has often amused me to see men in the New Forest, and in other places, with what they deemed a good dog. Their dogs ran straight out from them, and then, retracing their footsteps, back again to them; no doubt they would point if they came on game, but they beat no ground, and their owners would have trod up or found as much game if the dogs had not been there. It is very easy to have dogs too artificially broken: by that I mean, too much *broken to hand*, and possessed with the erroneous idea that their eye was always to be on their keeper or master, to look for the uplifting of his hand, and their ear for the report of the gun, to which they were also instantly to drop. This over-education is a great mistake, and I think it arises to some extent from dogs being taken on some outside beat where there is very little game, and on which ground they soon learn that they have little else to look to than a signal from their masters. I have had dogs, both pointers and setters, who were sure to go direct to the very spot, on field or moor, where the game was, as if they were aware of the likeliest locality; and so I believe some dogs are, and that not from a knowledge or long use of the ground, but from some

occult power which man knows nothing of. In my opinion, no dog is fit to shoot to that requires whistling to, speaking to, or rating; and not one man in a million is fit to shoot to a perfect dog, or to be that dog's master. You seldom see a keeper encourage or caress a dog for doing well; the keeper looks on him as if he were a machine made to scent birds, and incapable of thoroughly appreciating praise, whereas the dog is as sensitive and sensible as man, or more so, and keenly alike to rebuke or neglect.

The most difficult fault to deal with in some setters and pointers is, that lamentable nervousness which is denominated being "gun shy," or terrified at the report of fire-arms. The females of my old and favourite breed of setters were always inclined to this fault, and the same occasionally as to the dogs. It is an ill wind, though, that blows no good; and in all cases where this nervousness has existed the setter has always proved to be a most valuable dog, and very easily taught his duty when "gun shyness" was got over. When this species of timidity is rife in the blood, the greatest pains should be used to find out which individuals had it, so as never to have them out of couples when they heard the first gun. In short, never to permit them in the first instance to run home,

or to find an imaginary safety in flight. In breaking these confessedly timid dogs, a pistol or a gun, at first with *a very small* charge of powder—the charge of powder to be increased as the dog became bolder—should be used, and then the young dog, on the occasion of a winged or crippled bird, or a crippled hare or rabbit, should be allowed to run in and catch it: thus to connect the report of the gun with his own individual recreation. I have, though, known this nervous timidity to exist to such an extent, that, on the discharge of the gun, the young dog would fall to the ground; and then, on the report of the second barrel, absolutely go off into a fit. But in this case she had not been gradually brought to endure the squibbing and then the noise of the explosion, and therefore her terrors were the more confirmed when the loud report so suddenly rang in the air over her head.

The greatest care and gentleness, good temper and kindness, are requisite in the breaking of dogs, and it should ever be painted up in the largest characters over the door of all dog-breakers, that where the whip and brutality frustrates *one fault* it flogs in and inculcates twenty. It is well to have a *light whip* concealed in the pocket in case of absolute necessity, but on no account whatever let a dog-breaker or keeper carry with him those

horribly knotted flails which saddlers call and sell as dog whips; for they are instruments of torture that may break a rib, or by too much pain put out of the dog's head the reason of the punishment and the recollection of his fault, while they can effect no service whatever.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PACKET BETWEEN DUBLIN AND BRISTOL — THE IRISH-MAN, THE HEIR, THE BERTH, AND THE DEAD ALIVE.

PART I.

THE researches which I have amused myself with making among old books and records of the by-gone time, have put into my possession many anecdotes and things pertaining to places, and also to family histories, which I cannot quite bring myself to publish; simply and solely because I would not willingly give pain to any one. And there might be a descendant of the old stock yet left, near enough to the time with which I deal, to feel aggrieved at long-forgotten things being brought to light.

Under these circumstances, in the tale I am now about to recount I shall use fictitious names; and yet perhaps tell sufficient truth to amuse and interest the reader. My story starts from the Emerald Isle, and at a time when Erin was pretty

quiet, and no mischievous fools like the Fenians (I really think that the epithet "Fool" is the best definition of the term "Fenian") to interrupt her trade, or scare the outlay of English money from her shores.

In those days, as in the present time, there were men who outran the constable. Men who lost all they had to lose—which, very likely, was really very little—on the turf, at the Curragh, and other places; men who lost all they had at whist or games of cards, mains of cocks, or mains of seven: in short, there were tall, smart, handsome young men then, as there are now, very good-looking, very accomplished, very popular with both sexes, who, having very little at starting in life, betted or wagered much more than they had in their pockets—which, indeed, was *nil*—in the *hope* of getting something there to keep the devil from a fiendish dance; and I regret to say, that when they did this they perfectly well knew that *if they lost* they could not pay; but *if they won* they would pocket their winnings. A fact not in any way fair to those with whom they made their wagers; and, in my opinion, utterly dishonest.

"*Debts of honour*," however, in those days, if they were *not* paid, generally included the chance

of the great debt of life *being paid*, as the pistol was constantly appealed to; and a man would rather fight a thousand battles, and risk his existence, than take a coat-flap under either arm and tell his creditor to kick him, to the contentment of his (the creditor's) heart, if not to the satisfaction of his pocket.

George St. Mellor—for my hero must appear under that name—(not any sort of relation to the St. Mellors of the present day, if there are any), had many wild, raking young friends in Ireland, and in the City of Dublin, who liked him for his high spirit, fun, and frolic, and because there was no doubt that if a crochety, old, humdrum codger of an uncle of his would be kind enough to vacate the hooks, and slip out of a very large estate, George St. Mellor must come into it, being the next heir in entail.

Now, though George was wild enough and unscrupulous enough in some things, he was not egregious fool enough to give post-obits, nor to back other people's bills, giving seventy-six per cent for his money: so, poor as he was, he held on; lived on his friends a good deal, who were always happy to see him, though for the present they declined his bets, and dodged his English creditors by putting the sea between him and

them; and being ready, at a moment's notice, to fly into the mountains.

One fine morning—at least it seemed a very fine one to poor George—a letter came to him from England, marked on the outside, “Immediate and private.” On opening it, it contained these few words, hastily written to save post and packet:—

“Come to England; old Hunks is missing—supposed to be dead. Lose not an instant, for I believe he is no more.”

“‘Come to England!’ How am I to get there,” exclaimed George, still staring at the open letter, “without a penny to pay my passage to Bristol?” Then, after a few moments of irresolution, he sprang from his chair and exclaimed, “I *must* borrow the money! Surely Tim O’Brien will lend it me, on the chance of my becoming a rich man!”

In one of poor George’s impulsive moments, the thought had no sooner entered his head than he set about to put it in practice: so, clutching his hat, which he drove furiously on his nose, and rushing out of his little lodging, he repaired direct to Misthur Tim O’Brien’s door; and nearly knocked it in before him. The summons was so loud, that it not only brought a servant to the

portal, but it reached the master upstairs; who, from having had a wet night of mingled liquors, beginning with champagne, sherry and stout, and ending with port, claret, and no end of whisky, had a considerable headache, and not the least inclination to rise before noon.

No • sooner had the door been opened than George bolted upstairs, on hearing that the master was not yet come down; when, on entering his room, he found him bolt upright in bed, and caught the last murmured words of some sentence he had been muttering, somewhat to the following effect,—“Faith, then, it’s the duel; and, bedad, a pretty one, too!”

The instant George entered, he cast the letter just received on the bed before his friend, and said: “Now then, my boy, lend me the money to get across to Bristol.”

“Oh, be the Lord!” roared his friend, taking a dive under the bedclothes the instant he heard the word money; “Oh! it’s ill I am, and gone to sleep: fast as a church I am. Good night. Come and see me to-morrow.”

“No, no,” exclaimed George; “none of your sleepy gammon. I am in a fix; read that letter. Or I’ll read it to you here.” And he read the few words it contained. “There,” he resumed, “you

see they say the old cock is off his perch at last; and if it is the case, why then, my dear Tim, I'll book up to you and every broth of a boy among us; and no mistake on that head."

"Heads or tails, I tell ye," growled Tim from beneath the bedclothes; "it is head or tail, an open toss-up whether he is dead or not: these ould chaps niver die. I can't afford to shell out any more dirty money. And besides, ye can't sail till to-morrow night. There's no divil of a boat a-going to-night; so, don't bauther me!"

"Well, but will you lend it me or not? I'll sail whenever I can," demanded George.

"I don't know—no: there's time enough between this and to-morrow night; so I'm going to sleep, and be kind enough to do me the favour to leave my room."

"Well, well," replied poor George, "I'll come and see you to-morrow; but I say, don't be out!"

"Out, sir! by Jasus and the holy powers, whoever said I was out when I was in?" when, seizing a chair which stood by his bedside, he hurled it at George's legs; but who avoided it, by putting the door between himself and the missile.

The morrow came, and with it the post from

England; and another letter greeted George's eyes, marked externally, "*Most* immediate." It contained the words, "Your uncle is dead : his body was found to-day in the river, in my presence : there's no time to forward remittances. Come, and lose no time."

With this joyful annunciation to George, George instantly set off to his friend Tim O'Brien, whom he found at breakfast.

"Here," he cried, "you misbelieving son of the soil, will you believe it now? will you believe that yesterday and to-day I was and am the harbinger of good news to you? I am a rich man ; at least I shall be so when I cross the herring-pond to take possession : so lend me my passage-money, and I am off to-night."

"Lend you the money it is yer after! And where the divil d'ye think the money's to come from? They say the ould boy's dead, but ye see" (looking at the letter) "his body was but that moment found, and no time for particulars. Be my soul, they'll be at him with the bellows and brandy ; and there's no saying but they've got the breath into his body again afore this, an' he'll be the better for it all, and split his sides when he sees you a-coming, as you think, to take possession !"

“ Well, but I didn’t ask you for much,” replied George, almost in despair; “ only just enough to carry me over : when in England, no doubt I shall be able to command almost any sum I please.”

“ Well, then, let’s see,” returned O’Brien, looking to a paper on his table which gave the fares of passengers by the sailing-packet—steamers did not exist then. “ Oh, by the life of me, it’s a good deal ! But there, there, my boy, take it” (smiling good-humouredly); “ you’ll give it me back some day ; and mind, all the interest too. There’s your passage-ticket, and I wish you all the success in life.”

With many thanks our impulsive hero, George, then left his friend, to go to the office and secure himself a berth, with a promise to return to his friend and have a glass of hot whisky-toddy before he sailed.

The berth having been secured, immediately beneath one which had already been taken, George then busied himself with packing up his things, and calling on several tradesmen to tell them that good tidings had reached him, which would very shortly enable him to pay off all his liabilities.

The day thus speedily got through, George having sent his things aboard, about dinner-time

repaired to his friend, Tim O'Brien, and they sat down to a quiet *tête-à-tête* dinner, topped up by hot whisky and water, and a merry conversation, the tide not serving till rather a late hour.

“ Well, now, about this divil of an ould boy,” said Tim, when whisky in *quantities*, as it does with some people, inclined him to melancholy forebodings, and even to tears. It very often drowns the hearts of lovers, who are fond of it to excess, particularly if they chance to be tired and seat themselves on door-steps in the streets. Whether it is the coldness of the stone beneath that damps each aspiring hope, and makes them for the time believe that their attachment is unrequited by their cruel nymphs, or what it is, I know not ; but the same state of feeling which oppressed whiskied or wine-bewildered lovers in those days exists now : for I myself, not long ago, heard a disguised gentleman impede the vigilant efforts of an excellent policeman to lift him by the arm from the door-steps to his legs, by making no effort whatever to meet the constable’s views, but by desiring him instead “to tell her that he loved her ;” which the excellent officer promised each time that he would assuredly do.

“ This ould divil of an oncle, he ’ll never die,” continued Tim. “ Me mother had a grandmother

as ould as the hills ; and will ye belave me, she died three times, and came to life again a-most as soon as me mother had done crying. 'Twas not civil of her ; and, bedad, what was worse, when she did slip her wind altogether, be my soul all right and quite out of it, she had nothing to lave after all, and made me mother shed all those tears for nothing !”

“ Well, well, Tim,” replied George, “ there’s no doubt about my uncle having enough to cry for ; and I believe there is no doubt but that he is dead as a door nail. Men don’t lie forty-eight hours in a river for nothing, and as my informant saw him fished up, why there’s an end of *that* matter. A man drowned for two days and nights can’t recover : so don’t let’s have any of your melancholy forebodings.”

“ Melancholy ! It’s not me that’s melancholy, George, my boy : you’re the man to be melancholy, as you’ve just lost your father’s brother.”

“ I understand your taunt,” replied George, “ but no one can expect me to shed a tear for a man who always hated me, detested me because, by the accident of birth and a will of entail, I must come in for all the possessions he had so long enjoyed ; as if it was a sin in me to be the heir to that which no longer could do him any

good! Time is up, and I must be off to go on board the packet. God bless you, Tim, and many thanks. I'll write to you from England." Saying which, our young impulsive hero set off for the quay, and went on board the packet, which, by favour of wind and tide, it was hoped would make a short run of it between Dublin and Bristol.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GHOST OF A STORY—SHADES OF MY BROTHER SPORTSMEN—THE ROADSIDE INN AT LIPHOOK, AND AN APPARITION.

IN the—to some of us—long winter of our lives, when the snow of years accumulates on the tableland of the cranium, and the frost which breathes in the bitter wind of mortal decay stiffens the joints, and twinges in each muscular motion, then is the time when, in the dreamy or restlessly dozing night, the mind, in sporting phrase, “harks back” to bygone scenes, and dwells on past reminiscences.

Time certainly *has* “thinned my flowing hair, and touched me with his iron hand,” but still that enemy of Adam’s race has dealt leniently with me, made my waiscoat no larger, and as yet conceded to my free will the use of all my limbs, and an elasticity of spirit which still accords to me an indomitable resistance to all oppression

(I certainly have had my share of it), and the love of all those things I admired as a boy, and followed *à l'outrance* during the growth to manhood, and through the life that has lasted to the present time.

It may be thus with many of my readers, and it is thus with me. Often during the night I dream that I am riding my well-known and favourite horses of that day, "Brutus" and "Jack o'Lantern," and in my sleep I imagine the exact peculiarities of either. "Jack" in his flying stride, timing himself in his stroke to take off without any waste of distance, and "Brutus" at his own will breaking from his gallop to a trot, so to cover any height or distance, all to be done within himself. Even the long, deep inspiration which either of these loved horses would take to catch their wind after a gallop through dirt, when they saw a big fence coming, is again portrayed to me in my dream; and the tongues and method of hunting, in hounds long, long consigned to earth, seem to be set before me as vividly as they were when I cheered them on stag or fox.

At a time, perhaps, when peculiarly prone to these sort of nocturnal delusions, I was travelling about the country, and it so happened that rail-

way time, as well as inevitable time, chose to make me

“ The sport of circumstances, when
Circumstances seemed most the sport of men ;”

and I found myself belated and tired in the vicinity of the little rural village at Liphook, on the borders of Hampshire and Surrey, and forced by time and circumstances to put up at a once well-known inn.

Now time was when no traveller would have found fault with this, for the inn I thus allude to was then the great posting and coaching-house of “the road,” and the roar of wheels, and the cries of “first and second turn out,” either “up or down,” rang through the merry air, and kept the locality in loud and continuous bustle night and day. Now, however, the glory of the roadside inn was gone; its site seemed changed to grief, and the great elm-tree that had formerly during the heat of summer shed a cooling shade over panting steeds and thirsty, dusty-booted men, luxuriously grasping a fresh-drawn tankard of ale, stood sorrowing over the grave of the posting and coaching trade, a tearful mourner on every rainy day.

There were the long ranges of stables, once filled by steeds of every step and temper, curious

specimens of every blemish under the sun. Some that ran away the whole way, others that would be run away with by the rest of the team; some that kept the whip in action to send them to the collar, and others that kept the whip still, lest its touch should shut them up to stopping, and give them no collar at all.

These stables were a melancholy sight to me. They reminded me of my own. Where, in my full stalls, twenty goodly steeds used to feed, little else than a mouse stirs now; and that mouse may be a ghost for all I know, haunting the grave of the last oat eaten a quarter of a century ago. In this long line of disused stabling I paused. There was a thin cat there, deceived to expectation by the long-deserted hole of a rat. A broken broom, covered with very ancient cobwebs, lay under one manger, and the remnants of a stable bucket under another. Farmers came in and farmers went out occasionally, and tied up their horses anywhere; so that all the tumbling-down stalls were dirty, and the whole thing given up to dreary desolation.

A musing and a melancholy man, I left the stables, went into the house, and called for dinner and a bed. No smart waiter, with a white napkin wisted round his thumb, came forth to my

summons; the few people in the house looked like broken-down farming-men and women, and seemed to be occupied in a selfish discussion of their own tap.

“ Yes,” they said, as if astonished by the unwonted desire for such refreshment, “ I *could* have a bed; and what would I like for dinner ?”

Now that question was very well for them to ask, when they knew its meaning to be very wide; but the real dilemma was, what could they get to set before me?—a point on which I at once desired information.

“ A fowl.”

“ What, ready for dressing ?”

“ Oh, yes, quite.”

Spirit of Ude—that King of Cooks (when he chose it)—if you still delight in heat, then grill these people; or when you “cook their goose,” teach them to know the difference between a fowl hung for a time and picked for the spit, and a poor dear old chuckie, seated at roost in all her feathers, and “ready,” certainly; for her owner has only to clutch her legs and pull her screaming from her perch, to roast or boil, and serve her tough to table.

Well, up came my hen at last, flanked by some curious compound dignified by the name of

sherry, which I exchanged for some very nearly as bad spirits and water ; when, having gone through the manual—not the mastication,—of a meal, I walked forth and mused on the deserted garden and paddock in the rear of all ; and in the dusky hue of night fancied that I saw the shadows of galled and broken-knee'd posters limping over the grass to graze, as no doubt they had done in former times. In short, dear reader, from this last retrospection, hallucination, or what you will, I regained mine inn, and calling for a candle went to bed.

As usual with me, I slept undisturbed for three or four hours ; but then, according to my wont, I opened my eyes, or seemed to open them, and saw that a bright harvest moon was shining full in at my window, which I had left open and uncurtained, so as to get rid of a close or musty dampness which pervaded the apartment.

Halloo ! what comes between the moon and her bright reflection on the floor ? I saw the queen of night high on her cloudless way above the thing that seemed to intervene, and yet its body—for it must have been a body to do it—obliterated the chequered silver that had caught my eye, and bade the room be dark.

The dull, opaque body that it seemed, which

had come in through the rather narrow aperture afforded by the window, then lengthened up from the floor, stepped on one side the moon's ray, touched its forehead with one finger, and asked me "How I did?" and "hoped that it saw me well."

"Humph," I said, or seemed to myself to say, "it's not a robber, then; and if it were I could very easily chuck him back again whence he climbed. Well, my good fellow, and how are you? I'm pretty well, I thank you. What brings you here?"

"I only came, yer honour, to know if you was well," replied the substance that had hid the ray, now standing at the foot of my bed. "Not such accommodation here, sir, as you used to have at Cranford Bridge Inn, when I waited on your honour, and made the dark place in your sitting-room against the wall, when you was out at balls. If you remember, your honour, 'twas just a one side the fireplace where the back of my head rested when I fell asleep after teaching of my parrot. The little sitting-room you had, you know, next the road."

"I remember, Timothy, I said, or seemed to say: go on, I like to hear about old times."

"Lord—I beg pardon, your honour—Lawk, I should have said; them was glorious days at the

old inn! How you used to keep us alive then! Every stall full on your hunting-days, a both sides the road, at the White Hart and at the Berkeley Arms; so on at the Queen's Head in the village; then on again to the inn at Longford, and even lots on 'em turned back to Hounslow. Then I remembers you on them evenings walking through the long stables, the grooms all a-touching their heads to you, as least-ways when a-rubbing down they had no hats on, and saying, 'Well, sir, I suppose we shall catch it again to-morrow: we hear it's to be the bald-faced hind, or one of the three-year-old stags.' And then your answering them a-joking about which on 'em would have to send his horse to the kennel. "'Twas nice like to see them fine horses, done up for the night a little more comfortable than the doings up of some of them would be the next day. But lawk, sir, d'ye remember Mr. Mercer's a-coming down from town, and a-leaving his hack at our inn, to ride on his hunter to the meet, close by? I recollects your and Mr. Henry Wombwell's a-laughing about it when you come home. You had a sharp bust, I remember; and Mr. Mercer, nice gentleman as he was, was a-taking a line of his own quite comfortable, and a-seeing all of the fun, for most of it happened in

front of him; and among it one horse a-going remarkably well, with a stranger on the top of him. Well, you comes to a check, and the hounds throwed up. ‘Hold hard, gentlemen! pray, hold hard!’ says you. None on ’em does it, however. ‘Hold hard and be d—d to you!’ you roars out this time. I’m only a-repeating *your* word, sir; it ain’t mine; and then every man-jack of them pulls up. Up comes Mr. Mercer, and straight he goes up to the stranger whom he had seen a-bucketing along like mad, and he eyes him over, horse and all, a-riding round and round him till the stranger said as he ’d make him giddy.

“ ‘Giddy!’ says Mr. Mercer, quite up in temper for such a nice gentleman as he was. ‘Giddy, sir! Zounds, sir—yes—no—yes, it is! Zounds, sir! where did you get *that* horse?’

“ ‘Get this horse, sir?’ replied the stranger, apperiently as much up as Mr. Mercer was. ‘Damn me, sir, d’ye think I haven’t got a horse as well as you? Where did *you* get *yours* from?’

“ ‘Out of the same stable, my friend, whence the one you are on came,’ rejoined Mr. Mercer, in his nice quiet manner. ‘You’ve stolen my hack, sir; the one I rode from town and left at Cranford Bridge Inn; and if you don’t instantly return

him to the stable I’ll call assistance and take you prisoner.’

“ ‘ Oh, sir, certainly, if that *is* so, and *I have mistaken* him for *one* of mine—certainly, sir, I’ll take him back.’

“ ‘ Stay,’ replied Mr. Mercer, ‘ what’s your name? you’ll hear more of this.’

“ ‘ My name, sir?—oh, my name!’ Just then I heard you say, your honour, that you see’d that the stranger was a-praying in his inside that the hounds would take up the running again, and afore the stranger could speak the word, if ever he intended to do so, away went little ‘Ruin,’ her stern down; a slight stoop and whimper at first, and then, head up, away she went, a-calling all her companions with her; and away went you and all the field. ‘My name, indeed!’ said the stranger—so Mr. W. Norton said, the timber-merchant at Uxbridge, as fine a man as ever I see’d, and who heard it all. ‘My name, sir!’ he called out to Mr. Mercer, who went helter-skelter after all the others; and then, in a lower tone to himself, ‘My name’s Toddle, and I’m going back again.’

“ The fact was, the meet being so near, all the grooms had run out to see the start; and while they was all gone, in come the stranger,

pur tends to be in a deuce—beg pardon—to be in a great taking at not finding his groom, and calls to one of the under-ostlers to saddle the horse he pointed to, and off he goes. The horse was returned to his stable though, and I have heard say that Mr. Mercer thus found out that he had a good hunter in his stable instead of one that he deemed to be no more than an ordinary hack.

“ Them was, yer honour, jest about days when you lived at our inn! Lawk there, what fine folk, lords and ladies, used to come down! and public characters, too! I minds me of the great hactor, Mr. Liston, as used to come and spend several days at the White Hart: don’t you mind, yer honour, when he used to walk out of his room into yours in his dressing-gown, and talk to you while you was eating of your breakfast? And then the ladies!—howsever they used to come down at all times, hunting season or not, many on ’em nothing to do with you. Howsever, I shall never forget one hard frosty morning, it come on to freeze during a ball as you went out to the night afore. You had gone forth to look at the ground, not only when you comed home from the ball, which was pretty late, but aterwards when you was called, and found as it warn’t possible to

hunt; so you goes to bed again, leaving orders for old John Baldwin, the deer-cart driver, to come up to your room for orders against the next hunting-day, when so ever he came.

“ You hadn’t made up your mind, as it wouldn’t do, long, and had but just time to get to bed again, when rattle, rattle, rattle, came some wheels on the stones at our entrance, a-pulling up in a hurry. ‘Door!’ screams the parrot; ‘Door!’ shrieks the chambermaid; and ‘Door!’ I calls out too; and away we all runs to receive the guests; and there, lo and behold, was a carriage full of beautiful ladies!

“ ‘What time will the hounds be here?’ says a tall, handsome young lady.

“ ‘Not coming, ma’am,’ says our master, Mr. Adams; ‘the weather not permitting.’

“ ‘Weather not permitting!’ echoed the same lovely cretur. ‘Why, who ever saw a finer day, the sun brightly shining, and the roads got dry and as hard as iron! You be good enough to tell Mr. Berkeley that I *am* astonished’—Miss Cissew Swintam, I think she said her name was—‘that he should so have disappointed us. I’ll never forgive him!’ And exclaiming ‘Home!’ the carriage drove away.”

“ That’s all so, Timothy; but you have not

got the young lady's name correctly : it sounds something like it, so let it pass. Anything more on that morning?"

" Oh, yes, yer honour ! Soon after this old John Baldwin, the deer-cart driver, makes his appearance, and I showed him up to your room—the Yaller Dwarf, as poor dear Mr. Henry Wombwell, the uncle as would have been to the present Sir George, if he had but lived, called it. ' Well, John,' says yer honour, ' frost hard, ain't it? Anybody come down from town in expectation?'

" ' Two or three, your honour, and Pulmerston.'

" John never gave anybody their titles.

" ' Lord Palmerston ! did he make a mistake, too? I'm sorry for that, but I cannot help it. What did he say?'

" He says to me, says he, ' John,' says he, ' I ought to have knowed better than to have come : s'pose there's no hunting to-day as you're a-foot?'

" ' No,' says I to Pulmerston ; ' ground's as hard as a millstone : sorry you've come all this way for nuffin.'

" ' I've not come for nothing, John,' he replies, in his nice pleasant manner like. ' I had my doubts at starting ; but in London I could not judge much of the weather. Being in the saddle

I came on, and have had my morning's ride. Good day, John,' says he; and away he turns about and trots off for a twelve-mile back, as if he hadn't come a hundred yards from his own door.'

"Poor, dear Mr. Henry Wombwell, what a one he was *to* be sure! 'Timotheus,' he used to cry, 'what a d——d fool you are!'

"'If you please, sir,' I answered.

"'What the dickens,' or, as *he* said, 'devil,' 'do you bring me a teaspoonfull of brandy drowned in a bucket of water for? Take it back and make it t'other way.'

"'If you please, sir.' And then, while you was out at some ball or party, lawk, how he *would* just about mend his hand! I think, yer honour, if he had always been with you, he'd have lived a many years longer. He did not like your, and your brother, Mr. Moreton, a-calling of him 'Floodgates,' because Mr. Moreton always joked him for bolting of his liquor. It was him as said that which now gets told again in the world of other people—in the *Times* and sitch great papers. You was out one night, and says he to me, 'Timotheus,' says he, 'Master Grantley won't be home till morning: so I means to make myself comfortable while he's a-capering about

and dancing at them foolish balls. Some hot water, you know, and a bottle of brandy, and be d——d to you!’

“ ‘If you please, sir;’ and I fetches the brandy in, sets him a little round table by the fire, and leaves him for about an hour. At the end of that time I looks in again. He sees me. ‘Timotheus,’ says he, in rather a disguised-like voice, and as if he were in love, ‘meet me, meet me in the Willow Glen.’

“ ‘If you please, sir,’ and I stirs the fire.

“ ‘Timotheus,’ repeats he, in a louder key, ‘d’ye hear? Meet me in the Willow Glen.’

“ ‘If you please sir;’ then, seeing as he didn’t look quite capable of taking care of hisself, he was so jolly, ‘Mr. Wombwell,’ says I, ‘wouldn’t you like to go to bed?’

“ Hup he rises out of his chair, as perpendicular as a dart. ‘Mister Waiter,’ says he, ‘do you see that door?’

“ ‘Door, sir! yes, sir,’ I replies.

“ ‘Then just you get out of it and go to h—ll.’

“ ‘If you please, sir,’ I says, and out I goes. Lors blessi’y, your honour, ’twas only his ways!. A nicer, better, more generous little gentleman, never drank a glass of wine nor him. ’Twas

a pleasure to wait on him when you know'd his ways; and the only time I ever see him real put out, was when he left his duty as whipper-in to you, and, as you called it, was absent without leave for six weeks. He left his old chestnut horse at our inn—the one as you and your brother called the 'old Doe Rabbit'—and told his groom, as honest a servant as ever was—'Geams,' he used to call him—to go out on the old horse and give you all the assistance he could. Geams come home one day from hunting, and says he to me, 'Timothy, my friend, I've got fresh orders from Master Grantley;' you know, yer honour, we always called you so, long after you was growed a man and in the Guards. 'Well,' says I, 'then just about you obey them.' Says he, 'But I doubt if master will like it.' 'What's the order, then?' says I. 'Why, just this,' says Geams: 'Master Grantley says he won't have any patchwork in the appearance of his men, and as master has left word for me to give all the assistance in my power, I am to give that assistance in full fig, and to wear master's orange coat and cap.' 'Well, wear them, then,' says I; 'you can't wear 'em out before Mr. Wombwell returns: so they'll last him the rest of the season, if you does to 'em no more than fair wear and tear.' Geams

then, your honour, obeyed your order, and out he came in his master's coat and cap, and did honour to the livery ; for a quieter, nicer horseman, or more civil man, never sat in a saddle. Then, when Mr. Wombwell returned—some of his pretended friends had been a-teasing of him about it by letter—lawk, there, I never see a gentleman in sitch a rage before! What he said to poor Geams, and what he said he should say to you, was quite hawful, and terrified us out of our lives.' ”

Whether it was that the terror described by my visitor, as fear often does, aroused me out of my dream, taking it for granted that I had really been asleep, or that the sweet, damp, fresh air that had kissed the dewy grass came in at the open window, bearing on its flowery pinions more invigorating balm than placid sleep itself, I know not; all I am sure of is, that I heard the first lark begin to sing, with little else than the grey dawn to see her music by; I saw the pink streak upon the Eastern sky, at first but a faint and rosy tint, blush gradually to red; I saw my homely room, and I saw the floor; but neither dusky form nor moonbeam then remained: so, thinking of the dream, if dream it was, I turned me round and slept, till asked at what hour I should like my breakfast.

It fell to my lot to pass another night at that lonely inn, *the* inn of other days: but whether my dream returned to me or not, and if it did return, what was told to me by my respectful but mysterious visitant, must remain for the present untold. "A sad tale saddens doubly if 'tis long." So for a time my pen must lead to other scenes, still in a vein of humour, still in a vein of truth.

Who need to deal in fiction, when fact is to the fore? Truth is ever the most startling of the two, and the most amusing: then wherefore tell a lie?

CHAPTER IX.

HADDON HALL—CHATSWORTH—THE WYE—THE DERWENT
—AND THE DAUGHTER OF THE “KING OF THE PEAK”
—SIR GEOFFERY PEVERELL, ETC.

PART II.

ON a lovely October evening, when the woods of Haddon, and those of Chatsworth too, were in all the warmth and beauty of the October tint; when birds and beasts—though they neither sang nor leapt—seemed to bask in the long slanting rays of the western sun, and to give mute thanks to the great Creator for the blessings around them; when the Wye and the Derwent ran on in unruffled, mirror-like fashion, reflecting in their tranquil, but still current-moved bosoms, the red hawberry, that clustered richly among their wooded banks; when the meadows sighed in grassy sweetness to the sweet breath of grazing kine, and man felt that it was a luxury to breathe and live; Dorothy Vernon left the halls of her father, and with wary, and even timid glances, she proceeded from the Hall up the hill over the

site where, in these days of moving, noisy appropriation, the railway thunders its subterraneous course.

She stole away from her parental mansion, as many more of us, then and thereafter, have stolen away; that is, she was bent on an errand which she knew to be directly adverse to her father's will, the knowledge of which conjured up imaginary vigilance, and put a spy in every bush she passed. She thought each labourer going from work looked more closely at her than usual, and invested the most innocent things with jealousy and care. The timid doe that bounded from the fern startled her more than was its wont to do; and yet all thought, all things combined, *would not* have kept her from her lover.

Dorothy Vernon was not the only person from Haddon Hall desirous of concealment, nor were her nervous suspicions of bush and brake without some foundation; for the deer-keeper, whose narration I detail, he, too, had left the Hall, not on any mission of love, but to watch his master's deer: for he had suspected that more than one buck in the preceding summer had gone from Haddon in the direction of Chatsworth; but whether by the hand of a neighbouring and jealous forester, or by the theft of outlaws, he

had yet to determine. He had, therefore, ensconced himself in a thick patch of underwood mingled with fern, where he could gain a view of the lower and more open glades beyond him; and while in that position he beheld a figure, which afterwards proved to be Sir John Manners, come stealing through the shrubs, as if bent on some deed that was not altogether benefited by the light of day, but which was designed to escape observation. It was not long before the keen eye of the deer-keeper recognised the belted Knight; but the latter was upon his concealment so quickly, that before he could make up his mind what to do, the lover, and, to his still greater consternation, the loved one, his young mistress, met on the lonely but more open turf close at the side of his ambush, and were clasped in each other's arms, absolutely close above his head; for he had crouched to the very roots of bramble and fern rather than have his presence known.

The appearance of Dorothy Vernon was that of a young lady below the middle height; but though her countenance might have been found fault with on account of the smallness of the features, still those features in themselves, in outline and formation, were not only indicative of gentle lineage, but immensely sweet and feminine in their

changeable expression. When she smiled her little lips disclosed the pearly teeth, and her blue eyes a brightness that rivalled the flower, and seemed to say, "Forget me not are very useless words in the ears of those who look at me." As to her lover—he, too, was scarce of the middle height, and though faultless in form, and with features of good expression, his head was of the most peculiar formation, and instead of the forehead rising from the brow, it immediately fell back and receded rearward to rather an unusual length. A "long-headed fellow," certainly has been from time out of mind a sentence intended to indicate wisdom; and who knows but that the head of the hero of this legend was the first to start that method of expression? Sir John Manners was dressed in a costume for the chase, and was, perhaps, the hero of the old ballad of "The Chatsworth Outlaw," from which I have already quoted, staying, as he was at the time, at Chatsworth, with his friend, then Lord Devonshire. It is not unlikely that he even dressed like the foresters of that nobleman in order to disguise himself, and that—

"The Outlaw came—at his belt a blade,
Broad, short, and sharp, was gleamin';
Free was his step, as one who had ruled
Among knights and lovely women."

He might, in his vigil in the Chatsworth domain adjoining the woods of Haddon, have pretended to have been a trespasser, in expectation of seeing his love, and have simulated an outlaw; hence might have arisen the reluctance to either catch or kill him, as shown by the six foresters watching on the Chatsworth bank, at whose head seemed to be "Geordie Gordon."

"A thousand thanks, dearest Dorothy!" exclaimed Sir John Manners, when he clasped Dorothy to his breast, "for this kindly meeting. Alas, that your father should set his face so resolutely against my suit because I am a Protestant, while you continue in the Romish faith! Surely religion ought not to break the bonds of true affection! Nor am I, by kith and kin, or fame or fortune, unworthy of your hand. Tell me, Dorothy, do you not agree in this? And as he asked for confirmation, his arm the more closely encircling her waist; again their lips met, and again my informant, the deer-keeper, went closer down among the roots of the lady-fern, as if intent to creep into the earth.

"Yes, John," replied Dorothy, "you know that I agree in all you say; but, alas! my father has the pride of the "King of the Peak," as they call him; and that he has even sworn not to let

me wed away from the Church of Rome. What, then, can we do? You know my father's obstinacy, and that if there is one idea more hateful to him than another, it is that his daughter and his wealth and broad domains should pass into the hands of one of the Reformed religion."

"I know this,—I know it all, dearest Dorothy," replied the Knight. "And these harsh resolves of your father ought to free us from fetters that his severity renders unbearable. Let us watch an opportunity and escape this thralldom; let us fly and be united."

"That is all very easy to be thought of in your fiery imagination, dearest John; but how are we to accomplish it? Even now I know not but that one of my father's retainers may be watching me, and if I stay much longer away from the Hall there may be messengers sent in search. Horses are ever saddled for any emergency, and men ready to mount and enforce the bidding of the "King of the Peak," without much further warrant than his wish and their own right hand. Nothing can be done, John,—at least, at present; but I have had some thoughts of a possibility of success in this at other times!"

"Oh, Dorothy!" replied the Knight; "my own sweet lady-love! impart, then, those beautiful

thoughts to me. You have only to assign the way, and then my heart and soul, my head and hand, shall proceed or carve the road to our success, and for life I'll be your slave!"

"Oh, yes," she said, wreathing her fingers in the Knight's dark hair,—“oh, yes, it is very well to say you'll be my slave; but I don't want you to be. I wish for a lover, always to love me; and for a knight whose mind and prowess I may admire. Now, listen, and don't be so very foolish. I won't be kissed any more!"

The old deer-keeper at least heaved a suppressed sigh of thankfulness for this assurance, and Dorothy continued,—

"If we *are* to run away, the only chance is when the usual revels take place, just before and at Christmas. And listen, you naughty boy, if you can listen to anything save the hunting-horn and hound; my father, just before Christmas, intends to give a masked ball. Everything will be in confusion then: the old long gallery, or room for revelry and dancing, is to be full of quaint masks and mummeries; and as everybody's face and figure will be disguised, I might slip away, going off like a guest; and you, also in disguise, might come to the ball uninvited, and take me away."

"Oh, my darling lady!" cried Sir John, in

raptures, breaking through the embargoes laid on his caresses, and by so doing almost driving the deer-keeper into the ground, “the thought is too charming! and it is one so sweetly promising success, that I am enraptured with your love and with your wisdom; and, Dorothy, I will and must be your slave.”

“Well, then, be my slave until this masked ball. And now, John, I must go, or they will be asking where I am, and coming to look for me.”

So saying, Dorothy prepared herself for departure, when, clasping her once more to his bosom, the Knight, in raptures, asked, “When they should meet again?”

“Alas!” replied Dorothy, “it must not be too often. And yet, John, I would not doom you to entire banishment; and I promise you, that when the coast is clear, if you send some faithful messenger who may come amongst the many who do come every day to Haddon for dole and alms, let him look into the little hollow that is in the bole of an elm-tree close by the wall of the terrace, as you come to the entrance from the hill, on the same side with the window of my bedroom, and therein I will put a little billet for you, with your orders,—yes, with your orders, you naughty boy, if you will only be quiet now.”

So saying, further speech seemed drowned in remarkably sweet sounds, which had the effect of flattening the deer-keeper almost into an expansive nothing, when Dorothy, breaking away from her lover, glided from the brake of lady-fern like one of her own does, and was soon lost to sight. Sir John Manners also turned to stride less glibly away, but in his fourth step kicked his foot against the prostrate side of the deer-keeper, and tumbled over him into some bushes. Up rose the Knight in fury, drawing his short, bright hunting-blade; and up knelt, but not higher, the keeper. In a moment the Manners' grasp was on the offender's throat, but on spying the cognizance of a Vernon retainer the grasp relaxed, though the blade remained drawn.

“What dost thou here, dog of a listener?” cried the infuriated Knight. “If thou hast heard the speech of thy young lady, or a word from me, if thou tellest it to soul alive I'll rip thy tale-bearing tongue out of thy mischief-making weasand, and cast thee to feed the swine. Fellow! d'ye hear me? How came you here?”

“Oh, good sir,” cried the deer-keeper, “I was not here for the purpose of spying upon you; I was here to watch my deer when you and my young lady came upon me like, and not

wishing to distress her, nor anger you, I hid myself till you had passed; but you stopped just over against me."

"Swear, then," cried Sir John Manners, "never to speak a word of the interview you have seen, nor of a syllable you may have heard, and serve your beautiful young lady faithfully and well."

"Oh, sir," cried the deer-keeper, "I will—I do swear anything: though I know it is as much as my life is worth to keep it from Sir George, I will never speak of this matter; if I do, I wish I may be frayed of my skin as antlers are of their velvet, and be belled at by all the bucks in Christendom."

"Good!" replied Sir John. "Here, then, take this gold, and every year that Christmas comes the same amount will I give to thee if thou keepest the secret: but if the secret gets divulged, knowing the traitor, I'll 'grullock' thee clean as any stag."

With this Sir John, having given the keeper the money, pressed through the fern, and sped on his way down the Chatworth side of the Haddon bank, to gain the Devonshire domain.

We must then follow Dorothy Vernon along the brow of the hill, beneath which the railway

now runs, as she retired from this stolen interview with her lover. She came through the glades of the chase, not in a direct line for the Hall, but down the grassy slopes, which at length led her to the river Wye, betwixt Haddon and Rowsley, by the banks of which she paused to rest herself after her rather hurried descent from the woods above. She then indeed did look so pretty with her heaving breast, delicately flushed cheek, and beaming blue eyes, that had Sir John Manners been there, with the forester in the old ballad he might have sung,—

“ Say not thy maid’s *the* fair one ;
On the banks of Wye my lady spy,
A beauteous and a rare one.”

Having paused by the cool stream, and composed her dress as well as the expression of her face, she proceeded, as if carelessly on her way from a long walk, to the Hall, and again rising the hill, she passed by the terrace still known as “ Dorothy’s Terrace,” rounded its corner, and met her father at the entrance gateway beneath the “ Watch Tower.”

Sir George Vernon, though twice a widower, was not an old man, but hale and hearty, full of vigour, and very handsome. His features were

regular, with an aquiline nose and a figure tall and graceful, and if rather slight, still firmly knit in the manliness of strength and activity. In his dress he was gorgeously neat, and his gold-hilted sword and jewelled emblazonry of attire became him well, and fairly bespoke for him the name of "the King of the Peak." To the "thirty manors" of which he was possessed he added a vast amount of wealth from other sources, when, as his means as well as his mind alike tended to induce him to the most profuse hospitality, no wonder that in the latter years of the reign of Mary, and the earlier ones of Elizabeth, he was locally styled the king of his vicinity, and was well looked up to by rich and poor. As might have been expected, his power as well as his temper was, to some extent, overbearing. He was prompt to the sword, and as liberal of blows as of charitable gifts; yet with it all there was a stern justice in his local rule which satisfied his dependants, and left his equals not much to complain of. Thus stood, and thus was seen, the proud Sir George Vernon, when he met Dorothy coming from her clandestine interview with Sir John Manners, the second son of the Earl of Rutland. "How now," he said, "Dame Dorothy! I have been looking for you. We

shall need an addition to our catering, for I expect some visitors: and you, the Mistress of my Hall, go roaming in the woods, good sooth, as if there was not plenty to attend to here!"

"Dearest papa," replied Dorothy, half inclined to shrink from the searching and eagle eye of the King of the Peak, "I am here to do your bidding,"—so saying, she kissed him—"and I will at once attend to anything you like."

"Go, then, and inspect the 'washing tally'" (it has been described in *The Reliquary*, and was found in a remote corner of the chaplain's room at Haddon), "and then look to the buttery: the varlets and the scullions want looking after, as your poor mother used to say; and who so fit, aye, and who so capable of doing so, as her own daughter! Then get thee in, my sweet wench; I go to inspect my hounds and horses, and will see thee again at our dinner."

"Will," the deer-keeper, for we must now return to him, remained seated on the root of a tree, after Sir John Manners had left him, in deep cogitation with himself. In one hand he held some broad pieces, while in the other he supported his forehead, the elbow of that arm resting on his knee. His hand after a time slipped from

his forehead, and resting on his mouth seemed to restrain some words that came reluctantly at intervals through his compressed lips.

“It’s a nice fix you are in, Will,” said the deer-keeper to himself; “but it’s a fix you did not get into yourself, nor could you help it were you the innocentest fawn that ever was dropped. A fawn of one of my favourite does might have done just the same thing, and knowed no better. It’s a secret that seems too big for me! it is! A mouthful of hay like, as won’t go down. If I tells it, the lover will ‘grullock’ me—the Lord save me from the infliction! and if I don’t blab, and the King of the Peak finds it out, why the highest limb of the biggest elm at Haddon will be scarce tall enough for me to dance upon nothing on. Oh, Will! Will! you had better not have gone looking after your deer, and then you would not have got ‘toiled’ with the dear of another. Woe’s me! and what sort of a buck is it that’s a-belling after our young lady? that’s what I want to know. But I’ll go home and consult my old woman.” So saying, the keeper found his legs, and proceeded to the cottage which served him for a place of rest, such as it was, when not immediately required at the Hall.

On entering his cottage, the deer-keeper found

his better half busied with her domestic concerns, and imparted to her what had happened. His dame, true to the interests of her sex, at once advised him to hold his peace, concluding with the assurance, that "she dared say the Knight was a mate befitting her rank, or she'd never have let him kiss her, and that it was time now for her young lady to choose from the best in the land."

"Aye, but dame," remarked the deer-keeper, "it's all very well your saying she would not kiss this, nor she would not kiss t'other, but I have known one of my best young does go a-capering around to anything but the buck I intended for her; and just you look what a crying sin it would be if our young lady broke park with some swash-buckler as run'd her for her money, and I to blame for not making in with the hobbles."

"You to blame! What could you do? How all our serving-men, and women too, belike, would just about jeer you if you were to go blabbing to Sir George as you see'd the Lord knows who a-kissing of my lady! Let her kiss, and be quiet, do! I warrant Sir John has riches, else he wouldn't have the face to come after her!"

"Well, dame, he's an open-handed youth,

certain sure ; for, see here, he just slipped these gold pieces into my hand as if he had gathered 'em off a nutbush. I like the gold very well ; but, somehow, it sticks in my gullet as if it were a bribe to keep things from the Knight's ears, and I don't like that."

" A bribe !" replied the dame ; " and so it is a bribe to keep you from being a fool. Let money make you a wise man ; hold your peace ; see and say nothing ; and let our young lady pipe like a bullfinch in the bush for a true lover, as none is let come to the Hall. I warrant me she won't go wrong."

" Well, dame," replied Will, " let it be as you say ; but if ever I hide in the fern again without coughing to let lovers know there's somebody there, may I be blessed !"

" Cough ! you should always cough, or stamp, when you go where a lady and a gentleman are together."

" Alack ! alack ! I tell you, mother, when a man's out of sight he don't know but he may be smothered with secrets all at unawares, and none of his seeking, big enough to be the death of him. A pull at the can, mother. But there's the horn for dinner," he exclaimed, smacking his lips, " and so no more."

Thus saying, the deer-keeper hurried off to take his place in the dining-hall, but not before he had tossed off all his can contained.

It was a jolly sight to see the dinner ! There, on the dais, sat Sir George and his daughter, and such guests as might have come of rank enough to take their places by their side. Well-worn and deeply indented that old table on the dais is, as seen at the present day : its entire surface has been slit with knives, as if used in slicing the bread by the side of the trenchers ; while here and there notches have been driven into it, as if with the butts of knives enjoining silence or calling for attention. Oh, that jolly old board ! what visions of beakers and hosts of ribs, rounds, and cruppers of beef, its well-dinted brown old face reminds one of ! There were no made dishes then ; Sir George Vernon's hospitality was of the substantial sort : nor must my readers think that the joints were nicely proportioned, as we proportion them now—they were not : they came up, indeed, in plenty ; but as to appearance, they were severed to suit the size of the dishes, more than for the fashion of a name : and but for the weight of viands, there was little symmetry on the dining-table. Beef, sheep, and goat-flesh, or, as they at that time called the latter, the “ smaller

meats," were there, with venison, peacock, heron, and bittern, and broaches of the smaller wild fowl served up on spits, whence the guests on the dais cut what they pleased: but other than plenty there was nothing else to praise.

"I see the huntsman and the deer-keeper," exclaimed Sir Geoffery Peverell, who was one of the guests. "Sir George, may I call them up for merry woodland's sake, and the sport they have at seasons shown me, and give them a stoup of canary?"

"As you please, Sir Geoffery," returned the King of the Peak: "they are both thirsty souls and seasoned vessels, and no fear of their not carrying their liquor discreetly. What, ho, there! Will of the Deer and John of the Leash, approach the dais for a stoup of wine by favour of Sir Geoffery Peverell."

Uprose the two retainers at their master's bidding, and came along the side of the wall up to the corner of the dais, near which their pictures hang now. On their arrival, one of the butlers filled them each a cup from a flagon, and they made a humble bow to all the gentry.

"How are the hounds?" asked Sir Geoffery of the huntsman—a good entry, hey? and nicely coming on?"

“ Yes, sir,” said John of the Leash ; “ a handsomer lot were never seen, as I hope soon to show your honour.”

“ And how are the deer, my good friend Will ; and the wild cattle, and the antelopes ? D’ye think the latter will show us any sport ?”

“ I shink sho,” replied the deer-keeper, in something the fashion, but very slight, of a pendulum, his body swaying to and fro.

“ You shink so !” echoed the King of the Peak, in a voice of indignation. “ Here, Bibber,” addressing the butler, “ let these varlets finish that flagon. I see how it is. And if you can’t walk straight from the dais to the lower end of the hall, good Will the deer-keeper, thou shalt have a taste of the couples.”

The men took the cans of wine ; the huntsman, with a cool and marked satisfaction : but Will the deer-keeper certainly, for once in his life, looked as if he had rather that it had been water. He made an effort to be excused, by saying, “ Good Sh—George, I’sh unwell.”

“ Drink ! drink it, thou varlet ! or I’ll drench thee,” wrathfully exclaimed his master : so each man drank off every drop in the cans, and then were bidden back to the lower end of the hall.

With the huntsman it fared well enough ; but

poor Will, in the most ludicrous way, tried to fix his rolling eyes on an antler in the wall directly in front of him, much resembling in his gait a rope-dancer balancing himself in our day. In a death-like silence, and through a line of faces all of them inclined to laugh, had they dared to have done so, Will went, lurching along, till his deviating toe catching the leg of a bench, down he went head foremost, pulling a man-at-arms to the floor along with him, and up that instant at the dais rose Sir George. "Dick of the Tower, and three others," the King of the Peak right angrily exclaimed, "away with that pig to the handcuff, and water his wine for him. At him there, and let it speedily be done."

No sooner was this mandate issued than it was obeyed. Poor Will, fully alive, but a good deal more drunk than sober, was carried to the handcuff to be seen in the wall to this day, and his outstretched arm, fully extended upwards, fastened by the wrist to it, while a guard from the tower, provided with a huge earthen pitcher, trickled cold water down the extended limb, and then on every portion of his figure. This punishment, which is thus handed down in legendary tradition, while the single handcuff still hangs upon the wall, a rusty witness of the truth, must

have been, to say the least of it, odd in its consequent sensation; but I cannot believe that there was that severity in it which is locally affirmed. I see no reason why a man should "faint away" under such an infliction, as, from the height at which the shackle is driven into the wall, even a small man would not be put in a painfully extended position, and a tall man's arm would not be near at its full stretch, for I inserted my wrist into the handcuff to illustrate this narration. However, in this case Will was not long subjected thus to be a mockery to his fellows. Dorothy Vernon whispered in her father's ear, and he at once bade the prisoner to be released; and then rising from the dais, he, his daughter and his guests, passed from the hall to the drawing-room upstairs, and in a few minutes the dining-room was cleared of all.

"Ole fren," said the deer-keeper to his ally the huntsman, who was conducting him to his cottage, "I shay, what'll my ole doman shay to shish? It's fourth time I've had shee-shackle. Never mind," he continued, coming to a dead halt, and staring stupidly in the huntsman's face, "I'll never blab about what I'sh seen. Now, my young lady—but 'sh no use telling you—you're too drunk to understand! I'll punish Shir George

for this, I will — so, come on, or you'll tumble down. I'll not blab, now; no, not I!"

As Will said this, the huntsman, who was perfectly sober, sat him down on a stool in his cottage and retired, as the deer-keeper's wife commenced a furious lecture on her boozing better half.

CHAPTER X.

LEGEND OF STANDON HOUSE, ESSEX — MR. JORDAN, THE
FIEND, THE ABIGAIL, AND THE COFFIN HUNG IN
CHAINS.

It is to me deeply interesting to investigate old traditions of old houses, and I am not without the hope that among "the Legends of the Upper Ten Thousand" there may be much to invite the reader's attention, be *he* or *she* in whatever class they may.

When the old house bearing the above name was in existence, it was, at the time to which I allude, inhabited by a lady and her family, who, on their first taking up their residence there, knew nothing of its haunted peculiarities, and therefore could not be in any nervous state of mind inclining them to think of supernatural things.

I must admit that the lady of the house had heard a rumour, that there was *one* room in the building that *all* the servants were afraid of; but

to this, like a sensible creature, she turned a deaf ear, put no questions to anyone about it, and simply busied herself with comfortable household arrangements, and with taking to herself, and assigning to others, their rooms.

The order of the house having been perfected, one night, after dinner, she ascended to her bedroom to fetch some needle-work with which to amuse herself, when, on coming to the door, she found it locked, and on investigation discovered that it was not only locked, but the key was *inside!*

The first thought that struck her was, that her maid was there; so she knocked, and told her to open the room door.

On receiving no answer, and the key continuing to be immovable, she went back to the drawing-room and sent for her maid, asking "how the door came to be locked, and if she knew who was or had been in the room; for that, locked as it was, the key was on the inside, and, therefore, some one must have been in the room."

The very question seemed to affect the maid in that peculiarly curious way which maid-servants so often allude to, but which is certainly very difficult to comprehend, inasmuch as, to use her own language, it gave her "sitch a turn" that she could not explain herself "if 'twas ever so."

However, when her mistress accompanied her upstairs for the purpose of going to bed, in some doubt as to how she was to get into her room, the door then was found to be open ; and in course of conversation as to how it could ever have become locked, the Abigail told her mistress the following story :—

“ Lor, mum, I thought you knowed it! There was once upon a time a wicked old gentleman as lived here, which his name was ‘ Old Mr. Jordan.’ They do say, that to a many wives he added several scores of children ; leastways, ’twas said as he was married many a time more than once, some wives living, some dead, and that he had made a compact with the devil to keep all those good women, poor souls ! quiet, not to let them mislest him, nor be about running arter him when he was running arter t’others.

“ Well, ’tis said, mum, that Old Gooseberry, the black gent, found that this undertaking of his gave him a deal of trouble, and that at night, when all the household was a-bed, he used to come to old Mr. Jordan to remonstrate, and to ask him ‘ when he was a-going to give up his nonsense and be content with one wife, or, better still, no wife at all.’

Old Mr. Jordan had long retired from the society of his equals, and lived a good deal to his-

self, and these midnight bickerings and quarrelings in his bed-room, exchanged with some one with a deep, harsh-like voice, were often overheard by the servants, and whilst they was a-taking place old Mr. Jordan's bed-room door was always locked.

“Whatever agreement old Mr. Jordan came to, or wanted to come to, about us poor women, was never knowed, but always it is certain as he never got what I suppose the chemists make up, the elixir of life; and they do say it was that as he was always asking the devil for, but never could get the old gentleman to give him. The promise, as I have heard, that he did get was, and the ould 'un swore it on some oath—not his Bible oath, in course—the promise was, that the ould 'un, 'Nick,' as they calls him, would delay his death, or *keep him above ground as long as possible*.

“Well, time gave out at last, and old Mr. Jordan died. Then came the undertakers, and they pops the old gentleman into his coffin, and screws him down: they say as there was many witnesses to the putting him safe into his coffin, and among them his old valet, who asked to be permitted to do the last thing on earth that he could do for his old master, which was to twist in the last screw.

“Well, the people, tenants, servants, and such-

like, was often asking to be let come in to look at the coffin, in a kind of lying-in-state; and the first as went in come out again quite frightened, and said they thought the old gentleman had been put into his coffin!

“ ‘So he has,’ said the undertaker in attendance.

“ ‘No he ha’nt,’ said them as had been in to see; ‘he ’s out, and a-lying by it!’

“ Of course there was a gathering to go and look, for each was afeard to go alone; and there he was, sure enough, got out of his coffin, and then a-lying on the top of the lid! The undertaker was quite hurt at the sight.

“ On this the undertaker’s men was again called, and they put him back into his coffin in the morning; but before an hour had gone by he was out again. Then, after having been seen out, and the men sent for to put him back, he would be found again gone in: in short, the old gentleman kept a getting in and out of his last home permiscus like; so they resolved to chain him down, and at last they bound the coffin seven times round with iron chains, and *that* kept him quiet.

“ One clergyman, ’twas said, could never put this old gentleman to rest, or lay a spirit so unquiet; so they got together twelve good priests,

one not being enough: but they were all of them very near being outwitted. On the day of the funeral, when they went to lift it, the coffin was so heavy that, with double the usual number of men, it was quite impossible to carry it from the room. What, then, was to be done? they'd all come to their wit's end; so says one of the twelve clergymen, 'Go out and get plenty of help.' Out they goes, and comes in with four more carriers; but no good again. 'Get four more,' says the priest; and, quite beside hisself with vexation, his reverence sits hisself down on the foot of the coffin to rest. In comes t'other men, and, afore he was aware of what they was a-going to do, up they lifts the coffin as light as possible, with the priest a-sitting a-top of it. He slips off, when down goes the coffin again, and none on 'em could get it up.

"At last says one, 'An please your reverence, would you be so good as take your seat again? maybe that was it.'

"Down sat his reverence; up then comes the coffin light enough, and the priest kept his place till they got it downstairs: but when in public like he got off, and then down it went again.

"Well, it seemed as if the weight of the clergyman *had* made it lighter, and that was odd,

for at the next trial they contrived to lift it and carry it on a little, when, though the church was not a quarter of a mile off from Standon House, it took them six hours to reach it, from the weight of the coffin.

“Do you mind, ma’am,” continued the maid to her mistress, “when you drove up to take possession of the house, down came the hatchment a’most a-top of you? We all thought it a bad omen then, and I’m sure if I was you, ma’am, I wouldn’t live in sitch a place; no, not if they’d give me ever so.”

“It was not ‘the hatchment,’ ” replied the mistress; “it was the portrait of old Mr. Jordan that fell from the wall when we came here; and no wonder, for I remember your slamming the doors on that windy day, and shaking the whole building.”

“Yes, ma’am; but if you’ll please to remember, if so be it *was* the portrait, leastways nevertheless it had been hung on a large brass-headed nail, drove tight in just afore you came; yet for all that down it went, as if it had been nothing at all.”

“Depend upon it,” replied the mistress, “the bolt of the lock, when the door is too suddenly closed, shoots of itself; and as to the coffin of

the old founder of this house and family having to be bound with chains to keep him in it, if it was so, they buried him alive. I don't believe a word of it."

"It's gospel truth, mum, as I live. You jest look at the old gentleman's tomb—Heaven rest his poor soul!—there's not a word of religious comfort in it: but jest this,—'This is the vault of Richard Jordan.' And what is more, not many years ago a nephew of his'n come to be buried there, and when the vault was opened a young female party, as is beknown to me—she was then but a little girl—peeped into it, and there, as true as ever I'm alive, she saw old Jordan's coffin, bound round with several heavy iron chains! Why, mum, if you wanted further proof that something hereabout is wrong, look at the upsets, and a-coming off of wheels: if ever there is a capsize—there was two young ladies thrown out in my recollection—where does it happen? why, just afore this door! The house is for ever of itself a-catching fire, too; and no doubt there's a somebody a-haunting this place as means fire to be at the head of us all."

The tale I have thus related is fully believed in, in the adjacent village; and what is more, a truth which cannot be contradicted, no longer

ago than in the Easter time of 1866, Standon House was burned to the ground; but whence the origin of the fire, I believe no one has been able to ascertain.

It is curious to search out and investigate these legendary narratives, and to find that nearly in all of them there are some undoubted facts, that, of course, may give colour to an inordinate amount of fiction. Nevertheless, view the circumstances that surround them as rationally and as coolly as you may, everybody open to unbiased consideration, and not obstinately set against conviction, must admit that in many of these cases there is often a strange amount of circumstantial evidence, and of local incident, bearing out the gist of the legend, that it is very difficult to set aside.

As a ghost-seer myself, so certain of what I saw, that I locked myself in the room with it, to prevent the supposed reality escaping; my brother, Lord Berkeley, at the same moment, seeing the same thing, and being that which in these cases is so often wanted, a witness; I cannot entirely pooh-pooh the possibility of supernatural appearances. I never knew any benefit or good to arise from these visits, and, therefore, my duty is to doubt the possibility of

an appearance being permitted to a disembodied soul, when the wandering back again, whether from up or down, was not for some essential or beneficent purpose.

That the souls of murdered people, or people cruelly treated unto death, haunt the halls or chambers, woods, fields, or lanes, where the hour of their misery was protracted or completed, I do not credit. To my mind there seems the certainty or possibility of an optical apparition: it must be to the greatest extent an optical delusion, because the reputed ghost invariably appears in the habiliments, not of the grave, but of everyday-life; when, as it could not really be thus arrayed in the garment parcelled and partitioned out to servants, Jews, or old-clothes men—coats, waistcoats, and trousers, could not be spiritually re-appropriated for second or even last appearances on any stage—so the wisest way is to deem all an optical delusion; and as to the dealings of his Satanic Majesty, and compacts of the kind with that fabulous grandee, the very notion of it is utterly beside reasonable contemplation.

CHAPTER XI.

DUEL IN THE RANKS OF THE UPPER TEN THOUSAND IN HYDE PARK IN 1797—THE HON. COL. KING—COL. FITZGERALD—MAJOR WOOD—COL. STEPHENS—H. R. H. THE DUKE OF YORK.

THERE is nothing more curious than to peruse the account of the duels which took place many years ago, and to see the extraordinary and most improper way in which many of them were conducted. The decay of that ancient and respectable custom of an appeal to battle, really owes its consummation as much to the folly of the seconds, and ignorant blood-thirsty way in which the affairs were conducted, as it does to the religious views and moral opinion of society, helped in its downfall, as the duel most decidedly was, by the unpleasant fact that a modern jury would on all, or any occasions, under the preachings of the Radical demagogues of the day, been certain to have hung their betters, if they had but the shadow of a chance to do so. At a remote date when swords were the weapons, seconds always fought while

the principals were engaged; so that, in point of fact, seconds were of no use at all, for they were so occupied in taking each other's lives that they could neither watch over fair play nor be ready to strike up the sword of their principal the moment blood had been drawn.

Perhaps of all the extraordinary legends that have been handed down to us respecting the duel, was one which took place in 1797 between Col. King and Col. Fitzgerald. To make this very sad affair still worse, the two families were connected; Col. Fitzgerald's father having been brother to the father of Lady Kingsborough, who was the mother of the unhappy girl of this strange tale. She left her mother at Ancherwick House, near Runnymede, paddled herself across the Thames in a boat, and joined Col. Fitzgerald, who awaited her in a post-chaise. He took her to a lodging in Clayton Street, Kennington, on the Saturday night, and left her there at six o'clock the following morning; but why he did thus leave her, or whether that absence was caused by any regimental duty, as he was a captain in the Guards, does not in any way appear. He never returned to her, and she remained in that lodging till the Wednesday, when Mr. Lawton discovered her hiding-place, and brought her away.

Lieut.-Col. Fitzgerald being a married man, there was no possibility of any redress other than his death could give; so Col. King came over from Ireland and immediately called him out, sending Major Wood of the 15th Foot to arrange the time and place.

Now it appears on the face of these proceedings that Lieut.-Col. Fitzgerald, when called on to atone by combat for the wrong he had committed, declared his inability to provide himself with a second; which proves indubitably that he must have had other blame attached to him than that of eloping with a young lady, he being a married man.

He must either have refused to put himself utterly and entirely into the hands of his seconds, or the seconds he applied to thought they could not trust him. When an officer cannot find a comrade in his own regiment to see him through a quarrel, no matter what about, it looks very bad indeed; but when both his regiment and the list of his acquaintances each show him in his hour of need "the cold shoulder," why then I do not know where a man, calling himself a soldier and a gentleman, could go for further or more overwhelming condemnation.

However ill a man may have behaved, a

generous heart in his need is as much, or more inclined to stand his friend and get him out of his scrape, than it would be in maintaining him on the summit of a just cause. If a man tells his second the truth, however bad the truth may be, and asks his friend to stand by his side, and his friend consents, which he may do without tarnishing his own honour in any one way, the principal who asked that favour then becomes an automaton, to kneel and ask forgiveness, to stand and be shot at, without attempting any personal defence or aggression, or, if need be, to fight unto the death.

The second is to be blamed for all that happens; not the principal, for the principal does, or ought to do, just what his second tells him, and by his second *he* himself should be carried free of all further blame.

In this instance I cannot do better than quote the statement of Major Wood, which at the time, and to correct mis-statements, was sent by him to a paper called the *Conductor*, and dated from Flading's Hotel in Oxford Street, October 2nd, 1797.

He says that Col. King, in his hasty advent from Ireland, at once enlisted the offices of his friend and connexion Major Wood, to take to Lieut.-Col. Fitzgerald a hostile message. After

some trouble in finding him he did so, and arranged a meeting at Grosvenor Gate for the duel to come off in Hyde Park. Col. King and himself then met Fitzgerald at the place appointed, but he was unaccompanied by a second, as indeed, on the day before the meeting, he expressed his fears that he should be. They then proceeded in this guise to a spot in the Park near the Magazine—a favourite vicinity then, as it had been long before when swords were the weapons, for the adjustment of wounded honour. On Major Wood telling Fitzgerald, and very properly so, that he could not let the affair go on without a second by his side on the ground, Fitzgerald replied, that such was the odium cast on his conduct in society in regard to the matter in hand, that he could find nobody to go out with him; therefore, being sensible of Major Wood's honour in the conduct of the affair, he was perfectly content to give Col. King the satisfaction he desired. On this Major Wood peremptorily refused to interfere in any way on the part of Col. Fitzgerald, and assured him at the same time, that if no nearer relation of the family had been on the spot, he would have met him as a principal instead of a second. "Very well, then," replied Fitzgerald, "as you will not let it go on, I must again seek for a second," and he withdrew.

The next morning on meeting, Major Wood said to Col. Fitzgerald, "Now, sir, where is your friend?" The reply to this was, "I have been unable to procure one, and I wish the affair to proceed as we are, for I am quite sure you will act fairly by both parties." "Then, sir," Major Wood replied, "apply to your surgeon, who is on the ground, to act as your second; this Col. Fitzgerald immediately did, receiving from his medical companion a flat refusal, who said that though he would not act as second, still he would keep within view. Col. King, being desirous that the affair should come off under any circumstances, Major Wood then very improperly, and I believe very reluctantly, consented to proceed, and accordingly, as he says, he "measured out a very short ten paces."

Now in this, what might have been "a tragedy of errors," error No. 1 was a most glaring impropriety. In the full belief, as Major Wood admits, that Col. Fitzgerald would not return his adversary's fire, he steps "a very short ten paces."

We then come to error No. 2. Having, as I suppose, charged the pistols for both parties—Fitzgerald might, *perhaps*, have loaded his own pistol—having previously expressed his *personal*

hostility to Col. Fitzgerald, he runs the risk of an assertion arising among the press and the public that he had put no bullet into Fitzgerald's pistol. If Fitzgerald loaded for himself, of course that suspicion could not arise, though favoured in a very remarkable degree by the fact that the parties blazed away twelve shots at each other, at a "very short ten paces," and neither of the adversaries were touched, the affair ending by the declaration of Col. Fitzgerald that *he had no more ammunition*.

When the fourth discharge had taken place, Major Wood heard something again fall from Fitzgerald as to "his giving him some advice as a friend," but this was again distinctly and utterly refused; but at the same time Major Wood said, "Though no friend of yours, sir, I am a friend to humanity; and after what has passed, if you possess firmness enough to acknowledge to Col. King that you are the vilest of human beings, and bear, without reply, any language from Col. King, however harsh, the present business might, perhaps, then come to an end."

To this impossible demand Col. Fitzgerald replied by saying, "he was ready to confess that he was wrong, but no further, as he considered that that was enough." He then attempted to

address Col. King, who cut him short by saying that "he was a d——d villain, and that he would not listen to anything he had to offer." They then proceeded to have two more shots at each other, when the powder and ball of Col. Fitzgerald being utterly expended (as well they might), he made an application for one of Col. King's pistols, which was refused.

As they left the ground, the parties agreed to meet again the next morning to fight it out.

Now when we look at the circumstances of this extraordinary duel, within the circle of "the Upper Ten Thousand," we cannot but see the glaring impropriety of the whole proceedings, as far as the correct arrangement of the duel was concerned.

In the first place, and supposing that an officer's conduct had been so extraordinarily bad as to warrant the refusal of any comrade or friend to be his second, that ought utterly and entirely to have prevented the meeting, as no second should have permitted his principal to have fired at an unseconded man ; nor should he have taken on himself, personally and privately as a foe, as he had declared himself to be, to have measured the ground, acting too under the avowed impression that Fitzgerald was then to be slaugh-

tered, without an intention of returning the fire. Society had already pronounced an opinion in regard to the guilt of the act committed by Fitzgerald; therefore, if Col. King's second had *published the fact* that he had been called to the combat by the young lady's brother, and as the enormity of his offence had been so great that no soldier or gentleman would stand by him in the declaration of his penitence, or in the position of his friend; that he was unable in his body to brave the consequences, and therefore must agree to have his character for ever trampled underfoot, and forfeit all right to the claim of being a soldier and a gentleman. That would have been, under the circumstances, amply sufficient, and the dangerous folly that had risked the life of a gallant and meritorious officer just returned from the American War, been avoided.

The whole affair was at last settled by a declaration from Col. Fitzgerald, "that if they met again he should not return Col. King's fire." On this Major Wood refused to let his principal fire at a man who had declared his resolution not to assail him in return, and the matter ended.

And now let us see of what use a second to Col. Fitzgerald would have been, if one had been called in, and the matter vested in his hands. In

the first place, Col. Fitzgerald would have been *made to have received the fire* of Col. King *without returning it*; and then the second, if Fitzgerald had not been killed, would have removed him at once from the ground.

If, *after that*, Col. King had applied any offensive language to his retiring adversary, then it would have been quite within Col. Fitzgerald's power to have become the aggressor, and to have called out Col. King; for, having withstood Col. King's fire, and fired in the air, every amend that was possible to have been made had been effected, and the parties once again stood on that particular ground, at least, *as they were*.

On the Sunday following these extraordinary proceedings, on the facts becoming known to His Royal Highness the Duke of York, he immediately sent Col. Stephens of the Guards orders to put Col. Fitzgerald under arrest; and Col. King, also, was treated in the same way; where we must take leave of this extraordinary business, so lamentable in its commencement and so confused and foolish in its termination.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PACKET BETWEEN DUBLIN AND BRISTOL — SEA-SICKNESS
AND ITS EFFECTS.

PART II.

WE left our impulsive hero, George St. Mellor, just going on board the packet at Dublin, in his usual jumping-at-conclusions humour, and deeming that in a *few hours* he should reach Bristol; and then, after a journey for the last time by stage-coach, a carriage and four posters being to be his method of transit, after he had succeeded to his uncle's wealth, arriving at —— to take possession of his estates, a numerous tenantry weeping for decency's sake with the left eye, and smiling a welcome to him with the *right* eye, and all in dumb show demanding a reduction in their rents.

Crossing between Dublin and Bristol—often a very rough passage—was a very different sort of thing in those days from what it is now. Steamers did not exist; and men would have been

held mad to have hinted that by hot-water, and in spite of wind and tide, a ship and its living freight could be sped in almost a given time from one port to the other. The luxury of a well-found packet, with all sorts of provisions on board, did not then exist; neither were there the same facilities between these two cities for freighting a sea-going larder with every kind of fowl—from the turkey to the capon, and from the goose to the duck—as there are between Southampton and the Channel Islands. In returning from Jersey in one of the fast iron boats, a gale of wind the whole way, we went through the seas instead of over them; or, to speak to my brother-sportsmen in hunting phrase, “swishing” at the seas, and going through them as if they were “bullfinchers.” And there, in these more recent times, it was that I saw half a cart-load of picked and well-trussed fowls of all sorts swimming in that fashion about the deck, the larder on the deck that contained them having been swept away. There was but one passenger besides myself on board with sea-legs on, or a sea-stomach, or that could eat; and on inquiry I elicited, that the worse the weather the better the freight of fowls for *passengers’ consumption*, inasmuch as none were eaten up in stormy weather; and the price

they were bought *at* in Jersey, and sold *for* in Southampton, was immensely remunerative.

Well, our poor friend, George St. Mellor, in his hasty way, decided that he was to jump across the Channel; and as his friend, Tim O'Brien, would have expressed it, "The broth of a boy was to be there in no time at all." Little did he dream that it was possible, in the state of the ocean and the sky, for the wind to be dead against him, and such a head-sea on, as almost to suggest to the captain whether or not he had not better put back.

George was never long in making new friends; as I have said before, he was always popular wherever he went; and ere they sailed he had made the acquaintance of a middle-aged Irishman, who was also bound for the port of Bristol: and no wonder that they became acquainted, for he was the lodger in the berth immediately above his own. In a very short time the two fellow-voyagers were friends; but with this very wide difference between them—the Irishman, or Misthur Dike O'Fladgate, had speculated on everything; and among the chances of the sea the possibility of a dead calm: so, knowing how ill-provided with eatables this line of packets was, and that in a calm he should be able to command a stomach, he had

put up, in a nice strong hamper, a small but fat turkey, a piece of cold bacon, and a loaf, &c.—quite enough for one man, but not much more.

Well, they went to their berths—the Irishman above, and George St. Mellor immediately in the one beneath him; and they had not been there long before the packet leaned over on one side, and the little hamper belonging to Misthur Dike O'Fladgate rolled down the slant thus occasioned to the other. It was dark, and there came a hoarse cry on deck, and a clatter of feet, and a thumping, grating, bustling noise, which lasted some moments, and then all became mysteriously still, while the pitching, rocking, and rolling of the vessel, and creaking of her timbers, was to the Irishman unendurable; the sundry noises from his berth gave George St. Mellor, who was never sick at sea, very soon to know the state of his friend in the attics.

When morning came, the packet was still labouring in the heavy swell left by the gale of the previous night, and at a considerable distance from her destination. George St. Mellor had risen and gone on deck, but had returned, and was seated disconsolately on the edge of his berth.

On hearing his friend above him moaning and muttering about the Powers above and fiends

below, and all sorts of horrors under the earth, he asked him how he was.

“How am I?” exclaimed a faint voice; “by the bones of all the saints I believe I’m kilt outright! Did ye iver see a rabbit aten by a cat, and the skin of the rabbit turned nately inside out? By the powers that’s me; there’s nothin in me at all at all. I fale I’ve parted with everything for iver.”

“No, no; come, not so bad as that,” replied George. “You’re not much worse off than I am; you have gone through the labours of sickness, and now suffer from nausea and loathing of food, while I—as I know not, as to myself, what sea-sickness is—am beginning to feel the horrors of famine. There’s nothing to be got to eat in this cursed packet, and at this moment

‘I’m like to Esau, and would take,
Like Esau, for my birthright a beefsteak.’”

“Ugh,” said the voice above George, at the very idea of a nice brown fat steak, in its rich gravy: “Ugh, oh if you love me, don’t mention grub, or I’ll be ill agin.”

“No, don’t,” replied George; “don’t be ill, my dear fellow: it’s a bore. Nevertheless, I’d give worlds for that which you won’t just at present hear of.”

Then there was a brief silence, during which, if George could have seen anything more of his friend above, when he turned to look up at him, than the tip of his nose, and a sort of mountain made by his raised knees, he would have gathered from the expression of his pallid face that he was debating in his own unhinged mind whether or, not, in the future course of his life, he should ever be able to eat again.

“Sir,” said Misthur Dike O’Fladgate from above, in a rich Clare accent over the head of George, still seated despondingly and ravenous on the edge of his berth, in a voice rich in meaning but melancholy in tone, “there’s a basket, and faith it’s mine, there beside you; there’s a nice cold turkey, some bread and some bacon, in it: ugh, to spake of them is bad enough! I can’t touch a morsel of it meself, but by me faith, sir, you’re as welcome to the prog as the flowers in May. Oh,” as the packet gave a sudden lurch, “shall I iver see land agin!”

Thanking his sick friend most heartily, and never dreaming that a good breakfast was so near, George soon had the hamper open and its contents spread out before him, and began feasting away with the utmost relish, his sick friend now and then peeping at him from above, at times

with a curious, at times with a disgusted expression of face, and every other moment falling back on what did duty for a pillow, as if in sheer exhaustion.

Misthur Dike O'Fladgate then began to put his thoughts together; first he fancied that there was less motion in the vessel; then, that he was easier; and then, a sort of regret sprang up in his mind that he could not join in the repast with which he had come provided, and which was carried on so extensively below him; and then followed the thought,—Suppose he *was* to get better before the voyage was done, there would be nothing left for him to eat: but he was too ill, as well as too polite, to make any remarks of a personal nature.

Just at this moment the steward came into the saloon, flourishing his napkin, and being rather a wag, and seeing George St. Mellor so remarkably busy with the viands, asked him, "If his honour would not like some praties?"

"No, thanks steward, never mind; I eat a great deal of bread with my meat," replied George.

"You *do*, and a great dale of mate with your bread, honest man," was the prompt retort of the despairing voice above.

George made a most hearty breakfast, and put the remains of his repast back into the hamper; and when the sea went down, and the motion of the packet had in a great measure subsided, Misthur Dike O'Fladgate was agreeably surprised on getting out of his berth, as he expected on a hopeless visit to his hamper, to find that George had left him a liberal wing of the turkey, a nice little bit of the bacon, and a notch of bread; and thus surprised, and agreeably refreshed, Misthur O'Fladgate took wonderfully to George, and entertained him with some funny stories during the remainder of the voyage to Bristol.

“Our boys,” said Misthur O'Fladgate, “those that drive the public cabs, are very quick in their replies, and have a vast dale of cunning as well as low wit about them; they always get more than the fare if they can. I gave one of these spalpeens his shilling fare won day, so he held the shilling in his open hand, as it he was speculating on it, when, in a sly undertone, as if as much to himself as me, he said:—

“‘Faith, it's not putting me off with this ye'd be, if ye knowed all!’

“My curiosity was excited, well up to these rascals as I am. ‘What do you mean, said I?’

“Oh, faix, that 'ud be telling! an' this ain't

enough' (still appearing to contemplate the shilling in a speculative spirit).

" ' Well, there's another shilling, ye black-guard! now what's the matther? What do ye mane, ye divil's imp, by saying, *if I but knew all?* ' "

" ' Och! sure, didn't I dhrive yer honour the last two miles with the divil a linch-pin in the whale? ' "

" As he uttered the last word he leaped up on his cab with the activity of a kangaroo, and leered at me most provokingly as he drove away.

" At one time," continued Misthur O'Fladgate, " I had in my stable a beautiful pair of carriage-horses, and my coachman having won his discharge by an irrepressible inclination to whisky, I was on the look-out for a boy to drive them. We call all drivers 'boys,' between the ages of sixteen and ninety. Well, be me faith, though I say it that shouldn't, my wages are better than common, so I had fifteen applications for the vacancy.

" It will be more amusing to you, perhaps, if I tell you what my boy, or coachman, told a friend of mine was the way in which he contrived to make himself the successful candidate.

" ' Augh! be me faith, yer honour,' my selected

boy said, 'there were as many as fifteen of the boys after the place, and the first that wint up to the masther got axed the following question,—

" ' Now, me man,' says the masther, ' tell me,' says he, 'and no lies, how near the edge of a precipice would you undertake to dhrive my carriage without throwing me over?'

" So the boy consithered and, scratching his head, accompanying it with a lift of his breech, as yer honour knows the like of us always does, he says, says he, ' Within a fut, plase your honour, and no harm.'

" ' Very well,' says the masther, ' go down,' says he, 'and I'll give ye yer answer by-and-by.'

" Up comes another boy, the masther asks him the same question. ' Drive, yer honour! how near the edge of the precipice! why, bedad, within half a foot, and nivir a mistake.'

" The next boy what comes up says, in answer to the same question, ' Within five inches, and, by all the bones of all the saints of holy church, not a bit of danger whatsoever! '

" Then the next boy as came up—augh! he *was* a dandified chap intirely, and augh! so mighty illigant: so says he, he says, says he,

‘ I’d drive yer honour’s honour within three inches and a-half, and not upset ye; I’d go bail to do it.’

“ Well, at last *my* turn came, yer honour; and when his honour axed me how nigh I would dhrive him in his carriage to the brink of a precipice, I says, says I, with a slap on my thigh, ‘ Plase, yer honour, bedad, I’d keep as far off of it as I could: not within a mile on it, and no mistake.’

“ ‘ You’re the boy for my money,’ says his honour, and with that he puts me up directly.’ ”

“ There’s the port of Bristol!” now delighted the passengers’ ears, and broke in upon all further conversation; and with the usual formalities of bringing up, letting go, holding on, warping, hallooing, and boating, the living freight were all put safely on shore: so, bidding adieu to his kind friend *the* O’Fladgate, who had so successfully served to lighten the miseries of his passage over the salt-sea waves, George St. Mellor, full of buoyant hope and brilliant expectations, which in his impulsive mind would admit of neither doubt nor of much delay, sought out the first public conveyance that trended towards the county in which he expected to reap his golden harvest.

At the last stage short of his promised home

and harvest, as he was not personally known, people conversed freely of his prospects in his presence; and as he gathered from their assertions, and in answer to some questions he ventured to put, the belief was that his uncle had been found drowned in the river, or in his fishponds which communicated with it, and that divers persons had been present at the finding of the body, eight-and-forty hours after the old gentleman had been missed, and was supposed to have thrown himself into the water.

This to our impulsive friend, George St. Mellor, was confirmation strong; so on the strength of it he ordered a postchaise-and-four although the little money he had of his own, over and above that borrowed for his passage, was nearly or quite exhausted in simply paying the fare of the public stage-coach. George sat himself gracefully in one corner of his carriage, unlike the gentlemen of the medical profession, who invariably and skilfully sit on the crack or line that would divide the cushions on the seat, supposing there be two; and from the corner so gracefully occupied he prepared to wave a condescending salutation to the innumerable tenants and dependants who would, he thought, be on the look-out to greet him.

As he neared the old mansion no particular bustle met his view, no assemblage of people were on the look-out for any chance or for any expected arrival; and in this state of doubt and nervous expectation we must leave him, while we introduce our readers to foregone facts, which had been the cause of his present journey.

Old Mr. Hardandsharp was a rich old man, and, like many another very rich man, he had peculiarly stingy feelings in regard to the conduct of his establishment, and the virtues of his wife, who, much younger than himself, and very good-looking, was as fond of innocent gaiety and society as he was of his humdrum home, and the solemnity and dull monotony of his fireside.

It was not the society of his agreeable and clever wife that made him love his fireside; though intensely jealous of her, he seemed to regard her as a necessary piece of furniture, a comfortable arm-chair, or "a thing to thank God upon," not as a being fit for, and capable of commanding, all the gentle courtesies that could be offered by a generous and a thankful heart: and thus, as she knew her worth, and he could not or would not comprehend it, these two "moral Centaurs, man and wife," never drew well together.

At last the long, low mutterings of an ad-

vancing thunderstorm arrived at a crisis. An invitation came to a dinner-party, where he knew, or thought that he knew, some man to whom he had taken a dislike, for no earthly reason, was to meet them; and the storm culminated and burst in his declaration to his wife that the invitation must be declined.

To this she replied, that he need not go unless he chose it, but that as she liked the friends who had sent the invitation very much, and valued them, so for herself, and as far as she was concerned, she certainly would send an acceptance, and go out to dinner, while he could do whatever he thought best.

About this there were many and high words; but the lady held her own, and when the evening came ordered the carriage, which he had either the irresolution or the incapacity to prevent, and drove off to join the neighbouring dinner-party.

After a very agreeable evening, and rather a prolonged one, she returned home, and as she entered the hall she asked the footman in attendance there "If his master was gone to bed?"

"No, mum," was the reply; "have you seen nothing of him?"

“How could I have seen him? you know he stayed at home and that I went alone. Did your master dress as if going out to dinner?”

“No, mum. If you please, mum, directly after the carriage drove away master took his hat and stick and walked out of the front-door.”

“Walked out!” exclaimed the lady, in considerable surprise: “and has he not returned? It is now past midnight; where could he have gone to? Did he take anybody or anything with him?”

“No, mum; no more than his hat and stick.”

In this uncertain and strange state of things, as old Hardandsharp was a most punctual observer of time, dining to a moment and going to bed to a moment long before late hours, of course made uneasy speculation exist in the family as to what could have become of him. The servants under the circumstances declared that they had not the heart to go to bed, so they sat up drinking till breakfast-time; and as to their mistress, she could not sleep for thinking of the cause of this extraordinary absence.

Morning at length arrived, and scouts were sent out all over the adjacent country, to gain some tidings of the whereabouts of the lord of several manors, and of an infinity of money; but without success: there was no trace of old Hard-

and sharp beyond a hundred yards from his own door, and then his course seemed to be directed for the high road, or the river and the ponds, as both lay in the line which his nose and the front of his hat seemed bent upon pursuing.

The unsuccessful search of the first day came to an end; there was not a trace of the old gentleman to be picked up by footprint, or posting-house, or coach-office: so his imagined widow came to the cold conclusion that he had secreted himself in his fish-ponds, of which he was so fond, and that as he was seen going towards them, and no trace of him afterwards, in those fish-ponds his body assuredly must be: so, at the suggestion of a great many people, who had often expressed a desire to fish the waters—which suggestion, nevertheless, had been always peremptorily refused—she gave permission to use the nets for the purpose of dragging for the body.

No sooner was this sporting decree published, than any number of hands were offered to aid in the melancholy speculation; though those who offered to assist must have had an idea that the volunteers were so numerous that all hands could not be wanted. To keep the idle hand in occupation, it was observed that each person brought an empty basket, incapable of holding the lord of

many manors, but still of a size that might accommodate a considerably big fish.

The party of melancholy research commenced at the beginning; deep or shallow, they left not a yard of water untried, and they caught many and fine fish, the crowd of lookers-on, who accidentally brought baskets, scrambling for them. The absolute dependants on the establishment thought it *infra dig.*, or indecent, to notice anything smaller than their master, and continued their mournful hauling at the ropes, without condescending to prevent a gleeful and wholesale robbery arising from the sad occasion.

They had, towards the end of the day, and the bottom of pitchers of much strong beer sent down by their considerate mistress, come to the last and best pond; when, as the net was coming in, and a good many fish in the arms of it were coming out, lo and behold, in the bosom of the net uprose what they at first thought was a stick, but at the next roll they discovered to be the arm and shoulder of a man!

“ There he is ! ” shouted many voices, as the hands beneath those voices continued to scramble for and pick up the fish, amidst much laughter and throwing of mud; and at that shout in confirmation of the suspected fact, away went George

St. Mellor's correspondent to save the post, and transmit to him in Ireland the earliest as well as the most certain intelligence.

The net, however, came to shore without any body in it; yet enough had been seen to assert that "*he* was there." The melancholy news flew to the mansion and the vicinity, and, as we have seen, to the Emerald Isle. The fishers again ran out the net, and again without taking the object of the haul. The lead-line, then, was asserted to be insufficiently heavy to catch so large a weight, and extra leads had to be sent for and put on : this caused much delay, but at the next haul their trouble was rewarded—they caught the body of *a* man, but *not* the *man* they *wanted*. Instead of the lord of many manors and much wealth they pulled out the carcase of an old and habitually inebriate pedler, whom no one had missed or thought of, and who had effectually sought a gin-and-watery grave.

We must now return to our impulsive friend, George St. Mellor, whom we left approaching the Manor House as a presumptive heir, in his chaise-and-four.

We left him seated in the corner of his carriage, ready and willing affably to kiss his condescending hand to all those in haste to offer him their

humble greeting: but, strange to say, no expectant faces appeared on either side the way, nor did his approach create any greater notice than would attach to four horses driven in haste by two postilions at any time or season.

He did not like this; a foreboding of ill luck came over him; the words of his friend the O'Brien, that "these rich ould divils niver die," seemed to whisper in his ears, and ring out in each rattle of the wheels. Not three minutes now remained between him and the settlement of the question: "to be, or *not* to be," the heir and happy possessor of all he saw, was about to be put to the touch. There, there is the portico before the chief entrance, and beneath which the smoking steeds were pulled up with a flourish, and he was in the act of stepping out of his chaise; when, instead of half a door, the great folding-doors to the hall were flung wide as the poles asunder, and the wished-to-be-widow, who loved a joke and the opportunity of saying a good thing, confronted him, and with a low curtsy, and a sly and most provokingly merry smile, she said,—

"No, sir; a little too soon, sir: my husband is quite well, I thank you, and likely to remain so. I'm sorry *you* should have any disappointment,

and wishing you a prosperous and as speedy a journey back again whence you came, I am your very humble and grateful servant." So saying, with another low curtsey she turned round, entered the hall, and the doors were closed in poor George St. Mellor's horrified and disappointed face.

The fact was, old Hardandsharp, in a huff, had simply walked away, and, one way or other, he had put a considerable distance between him and his county possessions; and might, in his pet, have gone much further, had not a bilious attack overtaken him and laid him, well or ill, up, in a seaport town, where he was overtaken by some of his friends as well as by bile, and an attempt made to induce him to return home: but all in vain; he resolved to divorce himself from his wife because she went out to dinner without him.

When the intelligence reached her that he would not come home while she remained there, she very properly replied that she had not the remotest idea of moving; she liked her house, loved her horses, and was very happy: so that, as there was and could be no just reason why she should go, she intended to remain, to give him time to return to reason and to duty.

There was no getting over this; possession is a great point in the eye of the law, when, as old Hardandsharp could state no tangible reason for a severance *a mensa et toro*, and could not be induced from his repugnance to return, she stood her ground and he stayed away.

Long before this rupture in their domestic felicity she had been complaining of the rusty state of the house, as to its furniture, painting, and decorations; of the seedy condition of the servants' liveries, their unpowdered heads; and the decay of the stalls and drains of the stables: but in vain. The "ould divil," as the O'Brien termed him, was obstinate, and would permit no innovations nor improvements of any kind. Fond of a joke, as before mentioned, she seized on the opportunity of his wilful and unjustifiable absence to remedy all these neglects. She painted and regilt the house, newly-covered, most expensively, all the sofas and chairs, polished up everything, drained and repaired and highly ornamented the stables and stall of her favourite horse, reclothed all the servants in a new style of costly livery, powdered their heads, and gave the coachman an elaborate and expensive wig, and closed her labours by fishing all the ponds, as well as the

trout stream, which old Hardandsharp valued as the apple of his eye. She did all this to render the house fit to receive its master on his happy return.

To quit the wife of his bosom was one thing, and a thing of his own choice, and which seemed to give him no pain; but to have his house and servants furbished up in such novelty, and at considerable cost to him, was another, and vexed him beyond description.

At last a capable man of the world, and friend of both parties, stepped in as mediator; and on an ample maintenance, and without a serious or tangible charge against her, she consented to give up her position and possession of the house, and the "ould divil," as the O'Brien called him, returned to die in his parental halls.

For a time, poor, impulsive George St. Mellor, had to return to his friends in Ireland; and I would if I could recount the curious oaths and expressions shouted out by the O'Brien, when in person George reported to him the ill-success of his mission: but as they are beyond the possibility of any Saxon pen to form, to spell, or to explain, I must leave them to the imagination of the reader. The time did come at last when George

had to assume his suit of pleasant mourning, and, in all honour and fair-dealing, he paid every sixpence he owed in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LEGEND BELIEVED IN SIXTY YEARS AGO, AND REMEMBERED
NOW—TWO HAWKS—TWO TOMBSTONES—A LOVER AND
A GHOST.

PART I.

THERE stood in bygone days, and there still stands, a huge old castellated, half-turreted, gable-ended mansion, not very far from the forest, or what was once the forest of that ilk, concerning which, in the time I am alluding to, there were very strange stories, rife at that period and not forgotten now, that combined some romantic facts with perhaps a good deal of superstitious fiction.

Alas for that old house ! Time was when at night all its high, narrow, diamonded window-panes glittered with the ruddy glare from the hospitable fires within ; when comfort and hearty welcome blushed upon the outward cold from between the huge red window-curtains, for very shame that anything alive should be out of doors ; when that hearty old mansion had “stomach for

it all." It is changed now : glass in the window-sashes there is none, while the stanchions of the windows gape in utter vacancy, as if in an insane desire to swallow the very rough breezes they once took so much pride in keeping out. As to the tall old chimneys, some have tumbled down, leaving one in three, as tall gaunt mutes, or mourners, over their fellows who lie on the leads beneath.

When the Hall was inhabited, and the family there, not a window in spring and summer but held the martins' beautifully clay-built nest, its migratory owners, as they held converse on their connubial felicity, or fed their young, filling each room with joyous harmony. In the grove at the back of the mansion the rooks were in thousands, while the jackdaws and the starlings on the chimney-tops chattered and "quirked" as if their happy duty was to sing in praise of the ruling but irascible and hospitable old Knight, and his very beautiful daughter. He was a widower, and she—I scarce know how to speak of or to depict her—was the life of all, his everything, because he could do nothing without her ; and—and—I wish she had not been the toast of the country.

She was (in his drinking) on every man's lips—a *toast* indeed ! There was nothing cold where

she was ; born of the fire of the blood of an old, old ancestry, her worth and her beauty gave a tone to her vicinity, and refined as well as nourished the homage that she had.

I have stood in front of that old house and looked at its ruinous state in the present day, have gone beneath its doorless arch and gazed upon its unglazed windows, looked into its ample old kitchen, and at the still blackened and capacious chimney, looming like a huge undertaker over the buried embers of a million fires, that once had burned, had boiled, had baked and roasted, for the maintenance of knights and squires, grooms and pages, all in a happier time. The dappled deer grazed in its glades no longer ; the steeds had left their stalls, the hawks their mew ; the girl, the sweet and lovely life of all, where her footstep had touched the soil, or rather the well-kept velvet turf—her footstep, too, had left the place ; and as if the earth, stung to misery by that one fact, now in place of verdant herbage daisy mingled, and by violets touched, the very ground grew nothing but the upstart nettle.

Oh, what melancholy thoughts were mine, and how deeply I pondered over the legends belonging to that old haunted shrine ! In the glorious light of day, in the rays of the sun, and in the pale

beams of the midnight moon, I lingered there and thereabouts ; heard strange noises certainly, by night, that would have been strange to other ears than mine: but though the pale willow bough at times assumed a strange appearance, as it slightly swayed in the almost stagnant air, and though shadows came and went I scarce knew how, as an honest historian I must declare, that in my vigil nothing came that came from other worlds.

To proceed, then, with the legends that were told of that old Hall. There had been fighting there, not only in the time of Cromwell, but long before that. There were ruined chambers in the old place said to have been slept in by Edw. IV., by the "Richmond" and the "Pembroke," or "Pembrooke," of that reign : in short, if all the traditions told of the Hall were true, instead of one mysterious appearance an army of ghosts might have gone forth from bloody graves, not only when "churchyards yawn and graves give up their dead," but when the hills and dales of battle-fields gaped from their teeming trenches, and sent things forth to walk the earth, and make night hideous by their pallid contrast.

It was, then, in the reign of Edward IV. that my legend commences—about the period when

the goldsmith's "Mistress Shore," of Lombard Street in London city, had captured for a time the ever-wandering affection of the handsome king, and before the murder of the deposed Henry VI. in the Tower of London, and while that noblest of all "the Barons," as well as "the last," the famous Earl of Warwick, "the Kingmaker," was still living, that the old Hall, now a ruin, was blazing in all its open-handed hospitality.

The owner of the Hall was an old man, and an old soldier or knight, impatient of contradiction and choleric to insanity. His life had been spent in wars and foughten fields, and he bore on his brow a deep scar which at times affected his brain. His days of peace and rest had been, and were, given to hawking, hunting, and the chase : the wassail bowl, and *gentle passages of arms* (the latter sentence may be interpreted precisely according to the reader's better judgment), also came in for their share of attention. The Knight was not a Baron, though the right to be a belted knight in those days might have been proudly won by a lord, an earl, a duke, or prince. The old hero of my legend was not the "Baron of Grogswig," and certainly not "the Lord Knowszoo ;" he was simply a knight of that ilk,—his Hall shall be nameless now,—very rich, very

powerful, and of the most headstrong and violently inflammable temper.

An old man devoted to war and to the chase, and, on certain occasions, not over-temperate in his cups, was not the sort of chaperon to look after a young and very beautiful girl like “Hylda :” the consequence of this was, that the horrible Mrs. Grundy of that day (for I am sorry to say our lady of that name belongs to a very old family indeed) was for ever mysteriously winking and shrugging her shoulders, systematically gasping, and muttering “What was to come of it ?” and doing all she could to coax up shadows, when really hitherto there had been nothing but the purest sunshine.

Now Sir Bruce—it is best to give the old Knight a name,—was man of the world enough to know that where there is a beautiful girl, likely or not to come into a good fortune (for Hylda *was* an heiress), there were sure to be followers enough, either for love or money. Not wishing, therefore, to put himself out of his way by stopping at home or going out to look after Hylda, he just told her to take care of herself; with this agreeable addition, while he endeavoured to make the more impression by putting himself in a violent passion when he said it,—that she was to “bear

this in mind," "if she ever did wrong, or if he ever *thought* she did, or had done wrong, he would that instant plunge his 'dagger of mercy' into her heart : " for " he would sooner see her dead than a blot on his family escutcheon." " You know my resolution," he added, " and your lesson is before you : by the Blessed Wounds I'll keep my word. So come now and kiss me, darling, and be a good girl."

On an open, bracing morning in the month of January, Sir Bruce, accompanied by his daughter and a numerous retinue,—neighbours, friends, and dependants, joined also by some strangers—were on the open downs adjacent to the forest flying their hawks. From a sequestered little pool among the dells of the undulating lands a stately heron was put up, and two well-known falcons cast off or flown at the quarry. The birds being each of them well known, the match created the greatest interest ; and the whole field, Sir Bruce and his daughter at their head, set off at full speed. Everybody's head in the air, their eyes in the skies gazing eagerly up at, and offering wagers on, each stoop of the falcons, nobody looking where they were going to, and the only thoughtful creature of the party the heron. That bird, with his long sharp beak continually and guardedly up fencing at the

falcons, was making straight for the high oaks on the edge of the forest woods, in which he knew was his heronry, the trees offering him a refuge from his dangerous antagonists, who only attacked upon the wing.

On came the thundering hoofs of the horses in the hunting-field; up, and higher up still, in their attempt to get again above the heron, soared the hitherto baffled falcons: they were at the highest pitch, and the cries resounded from the falconers attached to either bird,—“Jessie will have him!” “Not a bit of it!” “The Swooper for a gold piece!” “Now or never—for they are nearly at the wood!”

At that instant, and in going, as they all were, at a gallop, down went many of the first rank, and over them many that were behind; the faces that had been upturned to the skies, suddenly were reversed to contact with the moist moss and swamp of mother earth, for the whole field had ridden helter-skelter into one of those long, narrow swamps that so often lie between the downs, or open higher lands, and the woods, and which have no visible or obvious mark to distinguish them from the sounder turf on either side, save that on very close and cool inspection they have a more deeply verdant hue.

The noise of so many falls, and the floundering of so many other horses who did not fall, but contrived, by immense exertion, to carry their riders through it, drowned all cries as to who were up or down. Hylda, whose thoroughbred jennet, as it was called, had successfully carried her over — or, more properly speaking — through it, still heard other horses galloping near her and behind her, and never thought that really out of a large field, save with a few yeomen and one other horseman of her own rank in life, that she rode alone; nor did she discover this till the heron had gained the wood, and the hawks, in lower circles, seemed to expect to be recalled by the “lure.” She looked for her father’s falconer; his horse stood panting by her side, riderless, and the man was nowhere to be seen. She looked for her father, but he was absent, too; when, as a fall was a thing of too frequent occurrence in those equestrian days to create any alarm, she then set about reclaiming her favourite bird. “Jessie,” she called, and whistled for her, in vain — she had no lure; when a stranger, a tall, handsome young man, beautifully mounted, rode up, and offering a lure which hung by his side, held her rein while she dismounted, and thus obtained possession of her hawk.

Having caught her hawk with the falcon on her “fist,” as it was called—but the expression certainly was not descriptive of her little hand, though it seemed larger than it really was, on account of the hawking-glove—the stranger put her on her horse, and then assured her “*how* happy he was to have been able to afford her even the slightest service.”

“And whom have I the pleasure of speaking to?” said Hylda, her beautiful blue eyes falling on the young stranger’s very handsome face.

“Lady,” he replied, “I know not if I may tell you who I am, or what brought me here; hawking was, I frankly own, but a pretence. Do not frown on me for this hesitation on my part to reply to your question; ‘the mark of my arm has been in battle, and my name in the Song of Bards.’ It is not said in any wish to boast, or be vain-glorious, but by way of attempting to assure you that you speak to one not unworthy to be by your bridle-rein. Chance, in some measure, has placed me by your side; time is most precious; opportunities for conversation may be but few: then lady, sweetest lady! grant me your confidence; say that you neither doubt, nor fear, nor hate me; and let me escort you to your father, who, no doubt, by this time has recovered his

steed from the swamp, into which we all so heedlessly rode.

Hylde all this time had looked in his fine, expressive face, on his athletic but most graceful figure, and on his handsome dress; and as the rays of the sun are said to gather moisture from the sea, so each glance of her brightly blue and lustrous eyes seemed to imbibe a dangerous fascination—the stepping-stone to love, and to return, yet in a more delicately bashful degree, all the admiration his dark eyes had fixed on her.

“I know not if I dare trust you,” replied Hylde, deeply colouring as she spoke; “but your looks are those of one who would not falsely seek, or falsely betray, the confidence of woman. Ride with me back to my father: he will thank you for recovering his favourite falcon; which, perhaps, he loves better than—than anything on earth; and I am sure, if you can accept the invitation, he will ask you to his halls.”

“*Loves* his falcon better than anything on earth!” said her companion in some surprise: “then, in *his* affection what place, sweet lady, do *you* hold? Methinks all things upon the earth should yield their place to you; and the mysterious realm that is said to be above us would scarce be heaven, ungraced by your fair charms!

But see! If I mistake not, hither comes a messenger. It is; he bears the cognisance of your house, and seems to be in haste!"

As the stranger said this, the man rode up and informed Hylda that her father had been bruised or shaken by his fall, and had gone home.

"Is he hurt?" exclaimed Hylda, anxiously interrupting him.

"No, my mistress: the Knight, your papa, says not. And further, he ordered me to tell you that you were to do the honours of his halls to any knights or gentlemen that had attended the hawking party; and bid them for the night to board, to bed, and wassail; for that he should be right pleased in their good company."

If words ever were in eyes, if eyes ever spoke the language of the soul, then the imploring glance which the stranger's expressive face turned on Hylda made sweet converse and gained response.

"You will give my father, then, your company, fair sir; will you not? and interest him deeply with the account of how *we* reclaimed his Jessie?"

With a low and graceful obeisance the stranger acquiesced; asking permission to send the retainer who had brought the message away to some huts,

not far off, to order his varlets to bring a change of dress.

His request was granted, and thus he secured the double advantage of a ride *tête-à-tête*, of some miles home, which gave him an opportunity also for additional advances and further explanation.

The sequel must be shown in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISTEMPER—THE SCOURGE OF THE SPORTING KENNEL
—FIDELITY IN DOGS—THE LATE MR. DAVIS OF THE
ROYAL KENNELS, AND HOMŒOPATHY.

SOME considerable time ago I published in the then rising *Field* newspaper an autograph letter from the *great* Dr. Jenner, to his brother-physician, the late Sir Matthew Tierney; the former assuring the latter, that he had made the discovery that “vaccination” had a similar power over the distemper in dogs as it had been proved to have in the human subject, in regard to the small-pox.

Before that letter was in my possession, I had heard the late benefactor to mankind state that he had tried vaccination on the dog, and ascertained it to be a *thorough prevention from distemper*. Upon that hint I practised, and ordered all the young hounds, and dogs of all kinds in my possession, to be vaccinated; but in the earlier part of my resolve I did not operate on the young

dogs myself, nor see that the vaccination was properly and effectively done. The consequence of this was that I lost many a valuable creature, simply and solely because, though *an* operation was performed inside the ear, or on the breast beneath the point of the shoulder, the two places most free from the tongue or the hinder toe-nails of the dog, the vaccine matter did *not* "take," and *therefore* the system was not properly affected by the temporary poisonous but health-preserving infusion.

During the last summer (that of 1866) my kennel was really blessed by three red setters of my old breed, by name "Chalk," "Char," and "Quince." "Quince" was out of "Quail," by my famous old "Chance," who went and returned from the Prairies with me. Those dear things were in their prime in this summer of 1866, and I looked forward to the approaching 20th of August and 1st of September; and as I visited the coops where all sorts of young game were being reared, my pleasure was enhanced by the thought how well my loved companions would behave when stubbles were crisp, the fields in floods of gold, and the bright, fresh, invigorating airs of autumn, breathing around us.

On a fatal, and to me most unhappy day, my head-keeper, Harry Toovey, reported that "Char"

was "dull, and off his feed." On inspection I did not like his looks; his once bright eyes and open, deep, chestnut-coloured brow, were clouded, and so expressive of dire distress that it seemed to me as if the approach of death was to be read in that face that never knew what an untruth was. My keeper assured me that on the previous night poor Char had fed well, and shown himself in his usual spirits; yet still, for all this, there certainly was a falling, or an apparent falling off, of muscular rotundity, that seemed to be the consequence of some days' illness, though the dog had fed well: and, taking all things into consideration, I scarcely knew what treatment to adopt. Nitre in his water and a little alterative medicine were the first efforts I made to reduce an evident inclination to fever. I had no suspicion at first of distemper, because the dog had been, while away from me, reported as vaccinated, and therefore, relying on this report, I thought him safe from the great pest.

On the next day, however, the dog was worse, and in a high state of fever, indicated by his pulse and tongue, with that unmistakable "husk" or short cough upon him, so frequently the accompaniment of distemper. His eyes, too, discharged, but *no discharge whatever* came from his nostrils, and still I doubted as to the origin of the attack.

Fever being so high, and apprehensive of inflammation on the lungs, I then took from six to seven ounces of blood from the neck, and the patient for a brief space was evidently relieved ; and I administered a stronger dose of medicine, consisting of calomel and blue-pill, which also seemed to do good. The amendment in poor "Char" did not last ; the "husk," or cough, continued, and the discharge from the eyes, and at last the fits, which so often accompany the worst phase of distemper, supervened, and nothing that I could do would remedy the evil. "Char" gradually got worse, and in a few days he died. His brother, "Chalk," then sickened in the same way ; and hearing that the late Mr. Davis, in the Royal Kennels at Ascot, treated the hounds for distemper homœopathically, I at once wrote to him, and as quickly received from him every attention and instruction as regarded the medicines, and "Chalk" was then put under homœopathic treatment, but without any good effect : he gradually got worse, fits with him supervened, as with his brother, and, after a longer struggle, he died.

In the same kennel with "Char" and "Chalk" was their relative, two years older, poor, dear, little "Quince." I had often sat by her mother's—poor old "Quail's"—hutch, to nurse this little

thing when she first saw the light, with the brightest blue eyes I ever saw: and as she was always very timid, as the females of this breed ever are, I used to take her for days succeeding days in my lap and talk in an "unknown tongue" to her, such as she certainly never heard from any lips but mine. She understood it, however, and never loved nor willingly obeyed any voice but the one she first heard; and, in short, if ever there was a single-purposed and never-failing love for one thing, it was poor little "Quince's" love for me. She never lost a broken-winged bird, however double and severe the hedgerows, and never required anything but caresses. When we sat down to luncheon in the fields, she needed no couples to prevent her importunities for food; when I sat on the ground, she made a spring over baskets and bottles, laid down at once by my side, and rested her handsome head and neck on my knee, without a wish to touch anything, however close to her, that was not proffered by my hand.

When her two relations died, we searched them to see if they bore a pock-mark in the appointed places for vaccination, but there was not a vestige that the cow-pox had ever taken; so at once, and before she showed any symptom of distemper, with my own hand I vaccinated "Quince," and a re-

triever named "Wye." *With "Wye" the operation took, but "Quince" refused the infection,* and, in a few days after the attempt to vaccinate had been made, she too showed the same symptoms that had killed her relations. I applied the homœopathic remedies, but again in vain; Quince died as her relations had done, and I could find no help for her. Alas! when she was vaccinated the seeds of the distemper had been sown; they were in and had hold of the system, though they had not appeared: the fatal malady would not permit the more health-giving lymph to do its office. I believe the same facts pertain to man in the small-pox as well as to the dog in the distemper.

All this time in the kennel with the setters, besides the retriever "Wye," there was a mastiff puppy called "Tiger," about ten months old, who had, in the earlier part of his existence, been successfully vaccinated by me. Both "Wye" and "Tiger" refused to take this fatal distemper, and they have remained well ever since; affording by that fact the greatest possible proof of the correctness of the great Dr. Jenner's opinion, and of the triumph of vaccination over distemper.

I am left this season (August 1866) without a setter or a pointer to shoot to, and, apart from the loss of dear things attached to me, whom I

loved with a fidelity akin to theirs, I am suffering from the deprivation of shooting fairly to dogs—a method which, in spite of modern innovation, I hold to be far preferable to beating for game with beaters in a line, attended by the bearer of a second gun, all in such hot haste and hurry that wounded birds are scarcely looked for, and no time given to load your own gun.

Let me, then, implore my brother-sportsmen to *vaccinate their dogs*: my advice is no empty counsel, I speak from experience, and now from an irreparable loss that no money can repair; for my three setters were the best broken and the fastest and the steadiest dogs that man can imagine. When I pass by those three little grassy mounds, where “Char,” “Chalk,” and “Quince,” lie by the grave of their sire, “Chance,” who died of extreme old age, I feel my sorrow keen and keener still; for I ought to have believed no assurance as to successful vaccination, though I had no sort of doubt but that it had been honestly if impotently attempted; and when those dear things returned to me, not being able to find the pock-mark, I ought with my own hand to have vaccinated them all. Had I done so they would still have contributed to my pleasure, and I should have enjoyed the ample breed of partridges that now

fall to my gun only in the presence of a retriever who acts as a spaniel to flush the game when required.

Vaccination in the dog is very difficult of success. The thin skin on the inner side the ear, which is the most susceptible part, however fine the lancet and steady the hand, often exudes too much blood, which dilutes the lymph and washes it away. The skin of the breast beneath the shoulder-joint is of a puzzling or baffling thickness; you must go deep enough, and yet not too deep, and there, also, the infection often fails.

In my kennel, at this moment (September 1866) I have young pointers and setters whom I have attempted to vaccinate several times, in vain; but I intend to repeat the operation till it does succeed, trusting ere long to obtain some "points" charged with matter direct, or, more, direct from the cow. I never have much reliance on matter that has been weakened by passing through several human systems.

Beneath five little grassy mounds, there, placed side by side and modestly shaded by the laurels, close to my house, lie the first of all my breed of red setters—dear old "Chance;" also dear old "Brutus," the last of the dogs that ac-

accompanied me to the Far West. The other mounds contain, as I have before said, poor little "Quince," a daughter of old "Chance's," and her relations, "Chalk" and "Char:" all these three last died from distemper when in the prime of life; "Chance" and "Brutus" died of old age. They all died in the year 1866. I, perhaps, shall never see such timid, gentle, faithful devotion again, as that entertained by poor little "Quince" for me: as I have elsewhere described, she had love, and eyes, and ears, for no other soul alive; and the last occasion of the manifestation of these qualities was on my return from Westbury House, then Lord Gage's, but rented by my sister the Lady Caroline, where I had been to finish the last shooting season. "Quince" had gone with me, and had (to her) the inexpressible delight of travelling with me in a first-class carriage, beneath the seat of which she threw herself, immediately opposite, to fix her loving bright eyes on me throughout the length of travel. She was some days with me at Westbury House, the sole support of my shooting, and in the evening fed and tended by my hand; so that to her it was the holiday of all holidays, *as it was also her last.*

On returning home, when we descended from

the fly that brought us from Wimborne Station, my head-keeper came to take her to her relations in their clean and comfortable kennel, and to her well-ordered dinner, and knowing that she would not leave me, he brought a chain and couples in which to lead her away; but with a loving, imploring, gentle look, little "Quince" lay down on the ground, and refused to move except as after me. On this, Toovey took her up in his arms as gently as a nurse could take up a little child, and bore her to that kennel whence she was never to come for sport or love again, and only to be brought out to die.

I ought not to have deemed those three dear setters — those three gentle, loving, and useful companions of many a leisure hour — as properly vaccinated, although I *was* assured that it had been done. I ought to have vaccinated them when they came home from their breaker's quarters with my own hand. Had I done so, I should not now have my eyes filled with tears when I pass by and look on those grassy mounds, and the mourned tenants of those little resting-places would have been leaping up on me and caressing me yet for years to come.

As regards affection and intelligence, contrasted as between the horse and the dog, though

both are capable of either, that of the dog is by far of the highest order. The horse of a medical friend of mine in St. Louis, in America, when standing in the street at his master's door, would at once take the carriage to the stable, and take it there safely through the traffic in the street, if simply bid to do so. There is a horse at the Wimborne Station that draws an omnibus, and after stopping to unload at the station door, when told by the driver to do so, he will take the omnibus to the exact spot beneath the line where luggage may be put on its roof by any alighting passengers. Again, how beautiful it is to see the great dray-horses in London, standing alone and patiently observant in the street, and then easily letting the barrels of porter or beer down into the cellar from their breast, walking very demurely and carefully *after* the descending tub, instead of drawing it! When you see one of these splendid horses in a coal-waggon or brewer's dray, walking in harness stately along, without winkers, he is sure to be the chief and trusted favourite of the drayman or carter. I have had horses who knew me well, and almost every word I said to them; such as "Brutus," "Jack-o'-Lantern," "Beacon," and "Brock;" but though you may teach them to know you, and to do certain things, you

cannot instil into their minds the higher-classed affection of the dog. You cannot induce them to guard your house, or to seize the foe that assaults you ; nor would you ever find that a horse, of his own instinct, was aware of a loved master's death, or that he knew the grave wherein that master was buried, laid down upon it, and refused the food that was brought to him.

A young lady was one day looking out from a window at the horses employed on the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway ; it was the dinner-hour of the men, who were sitting down eating their food, while the horses stood to do the same by theirs, each with his bag attached to his nose. Presently one large cart-horse, but just taken out of the cart, attracted her attention, through having his nosebag on, with, apparently, very little corn in it, and which he could not very well get at. He tossed up his head in an attempt to catch the food in the bottom of the bag in his mouth, and tried all sorts of shifts to master the grain left at his disposal. The tossing the bag upside down, however, did not seem to succeed, it only scattered the food and distributed it over his face and ears : so, leaving off that performance, he stood still for a few minutes, evidently considering what plan he should

try next to enable him to get at his dinner. A bright idea then seemed to strike him : he thought, that if he could rest the bag on something all would be right. So off he deliberately walked towards a large tub, which by chance was full of water ; into this he plunged his bag, but, on finding out his mistake, instantly drew it out again, in considerable astonishment, not in the least relishing a drink when he wanted to eat. The dear great creature then, in no way baffled as to the sort of thing he was in need of, walked off to some scattered pieces of wood ; but none of the slabs were of the height to make him comfortable : so, looking round for some suitable object, at last he thought he saw the very thing, namely, the broad loins of a fellow-labouring horse, who was standing near eating his dinner from a full bag of corn, which rested on the ground. Upon this broad, warm, and sleek basis, lifting high his head to take a sure aim at the centre, he flopped his cold bag, now heavy with water, much to the startled disgust of the recipient, who, without kicking viciously, immediately and indignantly “bumped” it off. Again was the stately burden-drawer thwarted at this time by his unfeeling, or too sensitive in one sense of the word, companion, and again did the

hungry creature go in search of the needful accommodation. At last he espied an empty cart; and on seeing it his ears betokened satisfaction, they no longer moved in doubt nor stood erect on the chances of uncertainty: they were almost still, and slightly reclined. He lifted his bag, and found the cart in height and steadiness all he required, and the sensible horse then enjoyed exactly so much corn as some pilfering hand had left him.

It is highly amusing, and to some who know no better, deeply interesting, to see in ancient battle-pieces by the old masters, horses fighting each other, and human foes too, while the respective riders do battle from the saddle; but these representations spring from pencils dipped in poetical delusion: the same as the pencil of that clever artist, my friend Mr. Cooper, R.A., did, when, in one of his battle-pieces, an engraving of which I have, he depicted himself as Oliver Cromwell going full gallop over the battle-field, one of his arms wounded, and helplessly in a sling, the other highly exalted in the air, his eyes looking to the heavens, and holding an uplifted sword triumphantly in his hand, with the loose rein of his bridle slung over the same arm. Behind and around the horse are the broken

implements of war, also dead steeds, and deep fissures in the ground; and again under him, and within the next stride, lie other dead horses, other fissures in the earth, and many things that would have thrown any but a poetical horse down, had he been ridden over them at full gallop, with a loose rein, and without a quick hand and eye to guide him.

In speaking of Cooper, I must tarry a moment to describe a ridiculous scene which took place near my house at Cranford, when Cooper was on a visit to paint me and a favourite horse, and three deer greyhounds in the act of taking a stag. For the first ten days Cooper did nothing but shoot, when on one occasion, as he and Captain Claxton, R.N., were walking across the park, they saw my late brother, Mr. Craven Berkeley, approaching; so, as my brother did not know Cooper by sight, much to Cooper's astonishment, Claxton suddenly pulled him to the ground, and throwing himself on him, commenced pummelling him and roaring to my brother for aid, crying out that Cooper was a poacher. In furious haste the demanded assistance came, when the truth of the matter was hastily divulged, or poor Cooper would have been beaten black and blue.

To return to the higher order of affection evinced by dogs. This affection is everlasting : it changes not of its own fickleness during life ; it is always concentrated on *one* individual, though others attached to or related to that individual are included, to a less extent, in the large heart of the faithful creature.

The dog has honest discrimination enough to know and to guard his master's property. He will fight in defence of his master, and will seek him and tell him when anything is wrong upon his premises. On the Prairies of America, my dear old dog "Brutus" would awaken my attention by a particular method in his bark, to a mule who might in the night get cast or entangled by the picket-rope or tether. A fact, while resident at Winkton, was very illustrative of this ; for, one early spring morning I was partly aroused by the tongue of "Brutus," who was chained to his house on the lawn ; but only partly aroused, because I was not apprehensive of any danger to my horses or mules, and therefore his bark scarcely awakened me. It did arouse me though sufficiently to induce a dream that I was on the Prairies, and that I heard "Brutus" giving notice that a mule was cast. I then awoke to reality ; when, on looking from my window, there was an

amusing donkey, who, followed by three horses, had opened the gate and got into the garden, teasing “Brutus” in his house, by shaking his long ears at him, and capering quite within the length of the dog’s chain. Hastening down to drive the intruders out of the garden, the donkey was by that time amusing himself; having it all his own way, “like the bull in the china shop;” and rolling luxuriously in a soft bed of young onions. “Brutus” understood everything, even *some* of the best usages in society—dear old dog! In the faithful simplicity of his mind he distrusted the bare idea of any man approaching his master. If seated in the woods with a lady, or on or in the grounds or the steamer-lodge of the late Lord Stuart De Rothesay, at Highcliff, however much we might be deep in conversation, “Brutus” watched to give notice of an intruding footstep. Often have I wished that men, and women too, had learnt the same discretion; for very often and innocently, according to the old adage, “two is company while three is none:” yet muffs of both sexes cannot remember this, and often show themselves when least desired.

It was this vigilance on the part of “Brutus” that led to the following catastrophe. There had been a party of ladies at my house to fish in the

river; they invited a neighbouring clergyman to come with them, who I was most happy to see; and when they arrived, there being five or six ladies to receive, it was some minutes before the clergyman was introduced to me. While speaking to the ladies, a low growl from "Brutus" reached my ear, and I beheld my reverend guest patting his head. On this the guest received at once a caution from me that "Brutus," though civil to ladies, did not like men to touch him.

This little episode in the day's diversion over, we went to the boat, "Brutus" in company, and after rowing and fishing returned home, all very good friends. When we reached the house, all the ladies but one, without my observing it, feeling, as they said, tired, turned into the drawing-room, while the other accompanied me to the extreme end of the garden, at the foot of which the river runs, and from which garden there is no exit that way; and we continued to angle for perch.

"Brutus" immediately put himself to watch, when, knowing that we could go no further than the boundary of the garden, and that we must return the way we went, he laid himself down as usual to intercept all approachers, and to await my return. It so chanced that the clergyman

was not tired; so, when he had seen the ladies to the drawing-room, he came out again, and proceeded to follow me in the direction I had stated that we should go; and on his road he saw "Brutus" lying down; and, what ought to have been a further caution to him, near "Brutus" was a newspaper which I had been reading.

Forgetful of the caution I had previously given, and perhaps misled by the apparent affability of "Brutus" when in the boat, and not having the thought of enacting a Monsieur de Trop before his eyes, he stopped when he came to "Brutus," and attempted to pat his head. This added insult to injury, so "Brutus" immediately flew at him; but not being certain as to whether he ought to use his teeth or not, he only boxed the deemed intruder's ears with his four paws; when, having his dew-claws on, he cut or scratched each side of the clergyman's face. For some little time I knew no more of this than that "Brutus" had been made angry, and had joined me to make me aware of it. He was soon followed by my housekeeper, who told me "that the ladies in the house desired my presence, for 'Brutus' had torn my male guest to pieces." Making much allowance for excited expression, of course our fishing-rods were thrown down, and I sped over the lawn home;

and, in passing "Brutus's" house, I chained him up, and kissed his forehead in a parting adieu. When I entered the room, to use a vulgar phrase, the ladies of the party—two of them—"just about pitched into me;" and, with violent emotions of horror, asked me why I did not instantly destroy my dear old dog, instead of giving him a kiss, and encouraging him for what he had done?

"Look!" they cried, pointing to my clerical friend, "'Brutus' has torn his cheeks to pieces, and Mr. —— will probably go mad!"

I really believe, that in that short time the ladies had induced Mr. —— to think that he already felt inclined to bark and bite too, and that hydrophobia had incipiently commenced. On examining the wounds I then explained, that the dog had *not bitten anybody*, for no dog could have taken any man's head in his mouth at one spring and bite, to the extent described. The marks or scratches were not deep, and were simply inflicted by the paws of "Brutus:" so far then as such bad effects were concerned, none could possibly arise. Having expressed my deep regret that anything of the sort should have occurred, everybody became pacified, and when I called on the clergyman some few days after, he was as well and as easy in his mind

as ever, good-naturedly assuring me that he had forgotten all about the annoyance. Poor, dear old dog! he shared my dangers, such as they were, on the Prairies of the Far West; he had for more than thirteen years assisted me with sagacity and fidelity in my pleasures. By land and water he was invaluable; and as an aid, if his aid were wanted in a row, I could rely on him better than I could on many men. It is a strange thing, however, in all that time, though in the woods and wilds he had been present at the capture of thieves, or poachers as they were once called, I never had occasion to call on him for assistance. He has died without ever having had to bite anybody by my desire. On the last and very recent occasion, when a discharged marine, wandering for theft as a “tramp,” had forced his way into my scullery, on finding, as he thought, that only the maid-servants were at home, abused and threatened them, and declared his resolution to rob the house, “Brutus” was again disappointed. I had come noiselessly behind the man, who at the moment was robbing a shelf of its brushes, and thrown him on his back; dear old “Brutus” then stepped up, and putting his mouth on the man’s breast, but without biting, looked up with his dark,

expressive bright eyes at me, to know if *he* too might set to work. A finger held up by me restrained him. Having but one servant at home, who just then came in, I locked that servant (Thomas Newman, who had been with me twenty-seven years) up with the robber, in a spare room at the keeper's lodge, having taken the thief's knife from him, and given Newman a stick, and told them both that I should be within hearing of any row. They thus remained locked up for, I think, more than four hours, or nearly five; the only conversation during that time that passed between them was briefly amusing:—

Robber.—“Where did your Gov'nor and you come from? I didn't expect to find you here.”

Thomas Newman.—“It's likely you didn't.”

After the lapse of some time,—

Robber.—“Well, I've been locked up now for some hours; s'pose your Gov'nor, when he comes back, will let me go?”

Thomas Newman.—“I think that's very unlikely.”

Two policemen at last arrived with a trap, and strange to say, that with a stolen pair of new militia boots on his feet, the robber, for his threats to the women and robbery, one of the brushes

being in his pocket when he fell to the ground, was only given six weeks' hard labour! He was a powerful man, in the prime of life, his hand *minus* a thumb, which he had cut off to obtain his discharge, and for which, *he said*, he had been in irons.

CHAPTER XV.

HADDON HALL.

PART III.

“The sun had risen above the mist,
The boughs in dew were dreeping,
Seven foresters sat on Chatsworth Bank,
And sung while roes were leaping.”

Old Ballad.

SEVEN of the Chatsworth retainers in charge of Lord Devonshire's forest were returning from a nightly vigil among the deer, when they were met by a man, booted and spurred, and otherwise if plainly, still handsomely dressed—sufficiently so to cause the foresters to acknowledge his rank by pulling off their hats. The knight, or gentlemanly esquire, whichever he was, acknowledged their courtesy, and singling out a forester whose name was “Geordie Gordon,” he beckoned him aside from his fellows, and thus addressed him,—

“What, good fellow! up late and early, too! I warrant me, thy vigil in my lord’s chases puts thee up to a thing or two more than is done by deer?”

“Why, ay, sir; we do sometimes see things we are not meant to see,” replied Geordie;—“wood-stealers, lovers, robbers, and such-like.”

“Ay,” said his questioner, somewhat sharply, “and lovers, too, as you say. Come, my good fellow, hast never seen a knight in these parts wooing a Haddon dear? Come, you see I know something; so tell me, and I will make it worth thy while. Hast thou not seen a gallant in company with the Lady Dorothy Vernon?”

“Well, sir,” replied Geordie Gordon, “I nae say I’ve not; but as it’s nane o’ my business, I ken nae more than just seeing the twa thegither.”

“Do they often meet?” continued his interrogator. “Come, hast thou seen them more than once, and dost thou know where the gallant comes from?”

As the stranger said this, he held out his hand to the forester, with money in it; but the stalwart north-countryman drew back.

“Nae, sir, I canna tak’ your gowd. I’ve answered ye as much as I ken; and for the wherabout of the gallant, I guess you maun seek him

there awa," pointing towards Chatsworth; "or, it may be, up at my lord's." Thus saying, the forester dashed away amidst the high bracken after his fellows, and was lost to the stranger's sight. Left to himself, the stranger then cast himself at the foot of an oak tree, and seemed grievously afflicted.

"It is, then, as I thought!" he murmured to himself. "Her coldness, her silence is accounted for. She has left me for a more favoured lover, and every hope I had is fled. S'death! but I will not — cannot bear it!" As he said this, his hand grasped a poniard at his side, and never did the deep-lined, frowning forehead of man, o'ershadow a more violent passion than his eyes expressed as he looked on the glittering blade now drawn naked from its sheath. While thus occupied, the sound of a step close beside him made him turn, and his rival, the very man he spoke of, stood before him. Each fixed their eyes on the other, the Knight simply in surprise at finding a well-appointed stranger there; but in the look the stranger gave to the new-comer there was, indeed, a concentration of every violent emotion that could rack the human mind: and yet he stirred not from his seat. It was as if his limbs, even his own life, were for the time forgotten in his con-

temptation of him whom he deemed to be his successful rival.

“You’ll not forget me, at all events, sir,” exclaimed the Knight, proudly drawing himself up. “May I ask who it is that favours the woods of my Lord of Devonshire with his uninvited presence?”

Upon this question, the stranger, without speaking, arose, and, looking to the right and left down the glades of the chase, to see that no foresters were near, he advanced a step towards the Knight, and thus addressed him,—

“I see, Sir Knight, the man before me who has robbed me of my love; who has swept past me like the angel of death, and destroyed my world and the things by which I hoped to live. I need no tongue to tell me who you are, though I have never seen you before; fate points you out as my destroyer. Draw, then, and defend your life!”

As he said this, the poniard glittered in the air, and the Knight was but just in time to draw his short hunting-sword, and with its point to hold his assailant at bay.

“Hold! madman!” cried the Knight; “and in this wild frenzy force not blood on either of our hands. How have I passed, like the shadow of

death, before you?—or how have I wronged, or even crossed your path?”

“Oh, villain!” said the stranger, “think not thus to delude and elude me. *Why* are you in this wild wood *now*? Is it not *to meet Dorothy Vernon*?”

“And what is that to thee?” replied the Knight, reddening with anger in his turn. The answer to this was a stroke from the poniard, parried by the sword; and for a moment they stood foot to foot in strife. Short as the hunting-sword was, it had the advantage over the poniard; which was, in fact, little more than a dagger; and the “rally” of lightning-like passes and quick parries caused a want of breath in each assailant; and a momentary pause ensued. Short as that breathing-time was, the loud twang of a bow sent an arrow into the sword-arm of the stranger. Then his weapon fell to the ground; and Geordie Gordon, from whose bow the shaft had sped, followed by the other foresters, rushed upon the scene. Rough hands and rude words were about to be laid on the wounded man; but the Knight stepped before him, and picking up the poniard, presented it to his antagonist, saying,—

“Here, sir, take your weapon; and though you have assailed my life, I will pass my word for

your safe passage through the Chatsworth domain : but take my advice, find some other country, and remain not here."

No thanks, but a scowl at the arrow still sticking in his arm, was the only reply to this courteous speech ; when the Knight, stepping close to the stranger's side, continued,—

"Nay, sir, you shall not go thus ; I will be your Leech. Here," he said to the foresters, "which of you has the sharpest knife ? Though the point of the arrow is through, a little force will free the barb."

A knife having been found, the Knight, assisted by the men, accomplished the task with much difficulty. Not a word, not a symptom of pain, escaped the stranger's lips ; nor even a thankful word when the operation was concluded. In silence, and with a frown of the most diabolical hatred, he prepared to follow the two foresters pointed out as his guides from off the Devonshire territory ; and even as the intervening boughs of a forest vista shut him out of view, the Knight thought that he saw an arm raised towards him in an attitude of savage defiance.

Time wore on ; the Knight and his loved one continued to meet in the Haddon Woods, while

Will the deer-keeper held his peace, as he called it; greatly tormented by a secret, or mute as to knowledge as a silent hound. The cold water, of which he had a religious horror, whether within his lips or applied in punishment to his arm, as before narrated, still cooled his attachment to his master, and for once in the history of the world there was no tell-tale to interrupt the course of love. The woods had at last been reft of their leaves; high winds had kissed the Peak, and hurried down to divest the valleys of their autumn verdure. Boughs, which had rustled quietly over softly-whispered words, no longer screened from observation; sullen stags, with swollen necks, lay listlessly in retired places by themselves; the small wild cattle kept for the chase were herded together on the sheltered sides of rising grounds; autumn was gone, and winter reigned triumphant.

One day beneath some clustered hawthorns, which, with an underwood of elder and hazel, still afforded some cover under the Haddon elms, on the Chatsworth side of the bank, stood Dorothy Vernon; and her lover was very soon by her side.

“Dorothy!” he exclaimed, as he passed his arm around her waist: “dearest love, I hope I have not kept you waiting! But the woods are not so

friendly to us now as they were; and in my way hither I thought that I caught the glimpse of a human figure—perhaps one of your father's foresters. I have arranged all my plans, my own sweet love; and at the masked ball your father gives, then, then we will fly together. It is, this whim of his to receive his guests in costume, a smile from Fate which portends the most assured result to all our dearest hopes. In disguise I can attend the ball, and disguised we can leave it together. My men, my horses, all shall be hard by, and all unnoticed through the attending crowds.

“ Oh, yes, dear John,” replied Dorothy, “ as you say, all seems to promise well: but, I know not why, there is a secret dread upon me that nothing can shake off. All that my old nurse used to tell me she had known to presage death, has forced itself upon my ears and eyes: there have been corpse-lights in the candles, and the ticking of a death-watch in the wall; an owl has beaten its wings against my casement—aye, against that very window whence I used to speak to you and to let fall my letters. I mean, the casement of the little closet adjoining my bedroom; in which closet there is another with a window overlooking mine, whence I have always suspected

some hidden eavesdropper first learned the secret of our attachment: for it is known now. It could have got to my father's ears in no other way. Oh, John, do not laugh at me; but I do not like the mysterious signs: and I dread the vengeance of Master Gruson, who tried to gain my affections. May not the signs of some approaching death be thine at his murderous hand?"

"No, Dorothy! to prove to you how wrong such suspicions are, I must tell you now that Gruson *has* attempted my life. It is over. We met in the Chatsworth Woods. I knew him not then; he assaulted me, and in the fight he was stricken in the arm from one of Devonshire's men. I requited him with kindness to his wound, and had him escorted off the lands. Fear not, then, on his account, for he is far away."

"Are you *sure* of that, dear John?" Dorothy replied. "Are you *sure* the form you mentioned as having seen in your way to me was not his? I implore you, be on your guard. His violence and diabolical inclination to revenge I know. It was an insight into his ungovernable passions that first led me to discard him; and when I gave him to learn that he was not agreeable to me, never shall I forget his threats of vengeance on any future lover. Oh, John! dearest John! how *could*

I have been so vain, so idle, so foolish as to have given him *any* encouragement? I little thought to make an enemy for life."

"Dorothy," replied Sir John, kissing a tear away, which, clear and as bright and sweet as dewdrop on a rose, trickled from her eyelash and soft blue eye to her cheek; "it is too late, now, to review the danger in a girl's playing with the feelings of a violent man: it is our task to guard against it now: and while I have hand and belted sword to guard thee, Dorothy, fear not any danger. I will protect thy life as the chief boon of my existence; and my own, that I may live to watch over thee." Dorothy leant her head on his shoulder as he said these words; and the long eyelash, yet glittering even as the "maiden's hair" leaf, after rain, lifted itself blandly up to let a sunny beam of playful light break through, to smile assurance on her lover.

"John," she said, "I will have faith in your protection; you shall protect us both, for your own sake: so I will try to drive these melancholy bodings off. Alas! we must part now until the eventful evening, for the woods are bare, and 'twould be folly to provoke suspicion. Adieu, then, John: to receive my father's guests I shall be in my usual ball attire; after their advent

I shall adopt various masks, and in one of which you meet me on the terrace. Adieu." And thus the lovers kissed and parted, and Sir John, lifting his hand to his cap, muttered their heraldic motto,—“God save the Vernon!”

Dorothy was proceeding leisurely along, on her way to the Hall, thinking of the past interview, when, on nearing some high withered fern, upheld by some furze bushes, she paused a moment in deep thought ; at that instant such an explosive and loud cough reached her ears, that she was at once aroused from her reverie. She listened, and it came again, hoarse, chest-racking, and loud, with such a curious echo that it seemed now in the air, now in the trees, then in the fern, and at last at her feet. She stepped into the fern and beheld Will the deer-keeper black in the face with his exertions, and lying upon the ground.

“Oh, gracious !” she exclaimed ; “Will, are you dying ? what has happened ?”

“Oh, dying, my young lady !—no, not dying,” replied Will, rising from his recumbent posture : “I only wished to let you know I was here.”

“To let *me* know you were there ! Why, what did you think I wanted you for ? And how came you here ? have you been following me

from the Hall?" Dorothy asked, with a nervous blush upon her cheek.

"Oh, no, my young lady—no!" replied Will. "I but just sat down like to watch the lairs of the stags, when, seeing you coming, I thought it my duty to warn you of my presence, that was all—that was all."

"Very considerate of you indeed, Will!" she rejoined.

"Yes, my young lady, yes; you might have got a-talking to yourself, you know, and told me unawares more than was my business; so I thought I'd cough to warn you."

"Much obliged, good Will," said Dorothy, laughing: "but don't distress yourself too much on my account, for I am not likely to reveal secrets to the air;" and, waving her hand to him, she passed on.

"To the air!" said Will to himself, looking after her; "not likely to tell the air! but if I don't cough you or somebody else may tell it to the fern, and it's there where the hoof pinches."

It was now that merry season of the year when, in the olden time, the coming of Christmas was heralded by the most profuse hospitality. The discomfort of the houses in the reign of

Mary, and even in the beginning of that of Elizabeth, seemed to be amply atoned for by the good cheer that mantled on the board. What mattered it if, even in the houses in considerable towns, "the fire was kindled by the wall," there being no chimney-place, and the ascending smoke escaped by door, roof, or window, or even through chinks of the clay-plastered wall! The rooms were warm, and the stomach comforted. According to the old song,—

"Back and sides go bare, go bare,
And foot and hand grow cold ;
But, belly, God send thee ale enough,
Whether it be new or old."

Men of all ranks seemed to think that the comfort of a roof was in its cheer, and they were not far wrong. Even in our own time we have known a palace but a cheerless and gilded prison, and seen large tables with very little on them to eat or drink. In the days of this true history, what if people slept on "straw pallets, with a log of wood for a pillow," they cared not how hard their couch was if they put on a warm nightcap of nappy ale. The comptroller of Edward the IVth's household paid only thirty shillings a-year of our present money for his house, and by that fact the reader will judge what was the probable state of

domiciles, or of that fabulous edifice since called the "Englishman's castle," in the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth. Haddon Hall, under the reformatory rule of Sir George Vernon, was the first mansion to raise itself from the rude customs of the earlier ages. The owner of it needed not a law like "the 4th and 5th of William and Mary, cap. ii.," which enforced "the number of horses, arms, and furniture," to be kept by a man of the Vernon rank, "for the defence of the kingdom." In his palmy day his income was more in money than a thousand pounds a-year, to which was added his vast resources in cattle and beasts of chase, fish and fowl, all of which contributed to feed the many mouths of his retainers, or to contribute to his available funds by their sale. His "demi-lances" and "light horsemen," whom it was his pleasure to maintain and keep effective, were a regiment in themselves; while his ample stables of goodly steeds for the chase, for draught or pleasure, amounted to forty well-selected animals, bred by himself or purchased in adjacent counties. His high tone, lofty bearing, and profuse hospitality, were proverbial; no wonder, therefore, that, as his manors and his lands surrounded it, men called him "King" of the adjoining Peak. He was a Roman Catholic; and

though neither an ascetic nor a blind bigot to an infallible priesthood and the imbecile doctrines of the Church of Rome, nevertheless he had the greatest repugnance to his daughter marrying one of the Reformed religion, and hence his objection to Sir John Manners.

On the day preceding Christmas-eve, and early in the morning, two butlers sat down on a bench in the hall, in solemn conclave, in regard to some orders given them by their young lady, Dorothy Vernon. Both were portly men, but one of a higher grade in the household than the other, inasmuch as one kept the key of the ale, or strong beer, and the other the key of the small. The one was *the* butler, the other the under-butler, and hence the names have been handed down to the present day. The butler, Master Frothemwell, was a grave, tall man, with a somewhat large and grizzled beard; the other, a quicker and smaller, and a fairer-haired man, whose name was Swiper.

“Swiper,” said the butler, “this is a bad business that my young lady has spoken to me upon, and it shakes to its centre the hospitality of our household.”

“Indeed!” said Swiper: “has the king’s chest been robbed?”

“His chest! no!” replied Frothemwell: “not

quite that, or we should have heard it from Sir George—aye, lip and hand, hip and thigh—and not from our young lady. It is the butter, sir! the butter has been taken, and our young lady will know how!”

“And what,” replied Swiper, “has that got to do with you and me?”

“It has to do with us,” rejoined the butler; “and this is why:—Jane Jollybun, the head kitchen-wench, has told our young lady that whenever John Taylor, our big butcher, or, as we call him, ‘old twenty-stun,’ comes to take orders for serving the Hall with ‘small meats,’ she misses two pounds of butter; and my young lady, knowing our importance in the household, has looked to us to catch the offender: but may I never draw bung or cork again if I see how it’s to be done!”

“Done!” cried Swiper; “I’ll tell’y how. D’ye see our cellar-doors have both got a grating at top, too high for even you to look through; but if we put an empty cask on end to stand on, we can see all that goes on, and ‘old twenty-stun’ none the wiser.”

“An excellent thought that, my worthy aid!” replied Frothemwell. “Come, Master Taylor of Darby Dale will soon be here: let us betake

ourselves to our respective cellars and watch him."

No sooner said than done: having cast an eye to see that the fresh butter had been put in its usual place for Dorothy Vernon's inspection, and where it was used to meet the hand of the reputed thief, each butler retired to his cellar, and after much rumbling of empty casks, and perhaps a smack at a full one, all was quiet, and a heavy and approaching step was heard in the entrance court. In came Master Taylor the big butcher, and going to a hole, or window, in the wall that opened from the site of the housekeeper's occupations, he read the liberal orders for the "small meats" of the season of the year; but what those "small meats" were I am at some loss to define: I suppose they were mutton, veal, and pork, and that the King of the Peak killed his own beef. Drawing back from the aperture, Mr. Taylor then found himself in the outer kitchen alone, where there was a large screen warming pewter dishes, and an immense fire waiting for sundry joints it would have to cook. The morn was cold and chilly, and the butcher for a moment put the broad disk, or rear of his person, to the fire; then, seeing the tempting rolls of fresh butter, he stepped up to where they lay, and deposited a pound of the

savoury article in each of his breeches pockets, and turned to depart. Ere he had cleared the building he was overtaken by both butlers, Master Frothemwell bearing in his hand a black jack of the best strong beer.

“Lord bless’y, Master Taylor! don’t let it ever be said you came to our Hall at this season of the year without a pull at the Christmas flagon!” exclaimed both the butlers together; when, as the big butcher made a show of faint resistance, they each took him by an arm and lovingly conducted him back into the kitchen; then, on the plea of its being a cold day, they sat him down on a stool within the high screen, and close to the fire, and while they plied him horn on horn with strong beer, to which, under any other circumstances, Master Taylor was very well inclined, they kept him, under one excuse or another, so long, that by the heat the butter melted in his pockets and ran down over his shoes. Heat adding to his thirst, when the butter melted the man was drunk, and in that phase the young lady’s attention was solicited to the butcher of “twenty stone.”

When Dorothy Vernon entered the kitchen she found the stout delinquent held and supported by the two butlers, one on either side of him, who seemed to think the whole affair was an amazingly

good joke; while with the greatest glee they pointed to the butter, which was absolutely running over his shoes, and cried upon their young mistress to regard her stolen effects.

Though in those times society in some things was of a much ruder cast than it is now, and broad jokes were tolerated then which would shock the more refined of the present day, still the sight of a great burly ruffian swaying to and fro from excess of liquor, and well greased by a quantity of melted butter, as well as from the perspiration extracted from the fire, was not a pleasing sight to the young lady, and as she was about to retire she commanded the butlers to acquaint her father.

“Oh, the Lord love’y, my dear, good, young lady!” exclaimed the butcher. “No! Do what’y will with me yourself, but keep me from the King! There, if he sees me suffering like from too much heat, and the effects of the cold air just a-coming from the fire and a-making of me giddy, he’s sure to say I’m drunk! But no,” he continued, raising one of his arms to his head and crushing on his hat, “I’m not drunk; am I, good gentlemen?”

At this appeal the butlers nearly died of laughing; and at that moment the voice of Sir George Vernon was heard in the entrance court.

“ Oh, then, my dear young lady, I am done for! Sir George comes in ; says he, So, sir, says he, you can’t carry your liquor discreetly! off with him to the handcuff and cold water! But no,” continued the butcher, with a more ridiculous approach to enacted grief, “ you won’t see the parent of many blessed little lambs dragged to the shambles, will’y ?”

“ Put him out of my father’s sight,” exclaimed Dorothy Vernon, “ and let him go away ; we know who is the thief now, and at some sober time my father shall hear the fact.”

So saying she left the kitchen, and the butlers hurried their victim into one of the out-houses, where he remained till he was sufficiently sober to carry his well-basted and nearly roasted legs away.

Winter had now arrived, as winter ever does ; according to the old saying “ Winter never dies within its dam.” The leaves on the larger trees around the Hall were all gone ; the hawthorns, shorn of their verdure, gave to the eye of the hungry “ redwing ” and “ fieldfare ” the ruddy berries on its boughs ; and wherever thorn or holly-tree disclosed their fruit, there might be heard the flapping wing of “ felt ” and “ throistle,”

and the harsher "screech" of the "missel-thrush," as some keen-set sparrow-hawk passed by, and scared the now songless birds from their occupation. Snow, too, had fallen; rough-coated and exhausted old male deer, both stag and buck, sought out the oak in Haddon chase to pick up acorns; and Will the deer-keeper had enough to do to pull down ivy and lop the pollard ash to brouse his herds, without having one glance to spare for trysting lovers. Oh, it was a jolly time among the poor and the dependants of Haddon, for in the Hall there lived a knight—a king, indeed—who held it to be his splendid duty to see that the indigent were comforted, and to care for the wants of all. What if his word was a local law—what if men drew the brand and rode armed to do his bidding—what if with stern but open justice he punished offenders, and was sharp on crime and protected his game and deer; he, on the other hand, was equally solicitous to find out suffering and to cherish the oppressed, and to the fatherless, the orphan, and the widow, he endeavoured at least to supply the place of those who had been gathered to the world to come. It was a glorious day in Christmas week, on which, and by every path, the people of the hundred flocked to reach the Hall. Gathered on the slope that ascended to the en-

trance-gate from the stables, one site of which is now occupied by the Lodge, wherein resides the housekeeper, and where each curious visitor in the present day meets with all attention and a draught of soda-water to quench the summer thirst, were hundreds of the labouring classes, mingled in their plain attire with the gay coats and badges of Sir George Vernon's servants and retainers. Alms were doled at the gate, and the Romish priest stood there to laud his flock and leer with sidelong hatred on those comers who had adopted the Protestant religion, and left a creed whose impious teaching taught infallibility in man. Though stanch, and to some extent bigoted to the tenets of Rome, Sir George would not let that interfere with his open-handed hospitality, and the Christmas cheer and the ready coin were as free to all as if a difference in sect had not existed. He and his daughter, Dorothy Vernon, came forth and passed among the crowd, with a kind look and word to all their poorer guests ; and, as an old peasant expressed himself, "the bread and the beer at the Hall was always better than anywhere else, for, while the lady sweetened and blessed the bread with her smile, the hearty bidding of the King of the Peak put strength into the strong beer and set the heart rejoicing." The programme of the hos-

pitality embraced a day of feasting and recreation to the poor, and on the following night a masked ball to all the nobles, knights, and gentry, for miles around. The day I am endeavouring to describe was the one before the ball.

Not to dwell too long on any portion of this true legend, the feasting and the alms were all over, and the company assembled at the Hall were out on the slopes to witness the games of the people. There were divers games and pastimes, many of which are in existence now; and according to the inclinations of the various groups, the people, male and female, ranged themselves in different parts of the open park or chase, in the vicinity of the Hall, to while away the glorious winter's day. Sword-play or single-stick, quarter-staff (which I think to this hour a most effective weapon), running, jumping, and "toddlings in sacks," dipping in tubs for apples, and climbing greased poles; and though last, not least, kissing in the ring, were all "i' the humour and spirit of the time;" and, true chronicler as I am, Will the deer-keeper was heard to say, that that kissing in the ring reminded him of his master deer when lording it over a very limited circle, to which he jealously kept his hinds or does. It somehow or other also increased the parson's holy labours,

and eventually added to his flock : but this was an old-world assertion of Will's, and my readers have it for what they think it is worth.

The games were beginning to flag—even “kissing in the ring” can't last for ever—when, along the road leading from where the highway to Bakewell runs now, and across the river Wye, came a single pedestrian. The moment he was seen a joyous cry arose, particularly among the prettiest rustic girls, of “Oh, the pedler! the pedler!” and a rush was at once made to meet the individual. Before this individual became the focus of an anxious, and admiring, and surrounding crowd, we must describe him, as he was doomed to play a conspicuous part in what was to come. He was a stout, square man, of the middle age and height, and bore a box on his shoulders, guarded against all weathers, of considerable dimensions. Fluttering from his hat and streaming from his shoulders, in tempting and gaudy display, were ribbons and laces, garters and gauds of every conceivable fashion, with which no doubt he had decorated himself in some retired corner of the woods, to tempt the assembled people gathered on the slopes of Haddon.

“How now, Master Jabesh Tiddler! Welcome,

Master Tiddler!" was the general cry, as the girls gathered round him.

"Up to our young lady first—she's the one for your gems and trinkets; and then us, for your ribbons and laces."

"Aye, and your garters," exclaimed a jolly lad, who had thrust his red cheeks in between the shoulders of the girls.

"Hold your imprance, do, you good-for-nothing!" cried two of his female playmates, knocking his hat over his eyes, and making way for Master William, the head deer-keeper, who came to take the pedler to the King. "Hip, hip, hoora for the King of the Peak!" Thus shouting and laughing, tussling and romping, the merry throng opened out left and right, and the pedler ascended to the Hall to display his wares to the entertainers and the higher guests, before he submitted them to vulgar hands.

While this was going on, there stood the rather tall figure of a man, wrapped in a plain cloak, beneath a group of hawthorns, whose stems partly served to conceal him, while at the same time the position he kept was far enough brought out in view to dispel any idea that he was purposely concealed. He had taken no part in the games, and if he mingled among the crowd it was as a passing

stranger or looker-on, of too high a grade to accept out-door refreshment, and yet in appearance not exalted enough in position to walk in at the entrance-gate and seek to share the higher honours. As he looked on the scene around him, it was from beneath eyebrows dark in themselves, but knit firmly into a frown; and, in expression, black as Egyptian night. Had the reader watched him narrowly, it would have been seen that when Dorothy Vernon came forth, "the observed of all observers," the action of his chest increased, and his keen and flashing, yet slightly blood-shot eye, seemed to search among her male companions for a victim on whom to concentrate the furious jealousy of a baffled fiend. Apparently this object for concentration was not at hand, or if he was, he was so disguised among the crowds of people as not to strike his searching glance, and the stranger continued to lean against a tree as if a mere inspector of passing events.

The pedler was not long detained at the Hall, but shortly came forth, well satisfied with the generosity of Dorothy Vernon, the ladies around her, and her female attendants; and the heart of the pedler was light in proportion as his pocket was heavy, and he was soon surrounded by a joyous and vociferous crowd. "Here, my charmers!

here, my beauties ! come and see my wares ! Here," he cried, holding up ribbons and laces, "here are things to make the skin the like of snow ; and laces, too, to keep the waist as slim as the middle of a wasp. Oh, but look ! here's the dye of all the flowers ! here's a dress to kill a dozen sweethearts ! and all to go for nothing ; for I'm poor, and I want to sell my wares, as I am an honest man."

"I say, Master Tiddler, I'll have this to put in my cap," cried one dark-eyed girl ; "And I'll have this 'un to put in mine," said a blue-eyed one ; and so the demands continued till the pedler had sold all his lighter gauds, and then had to bargain away to the men his knives and male habiliments. So charmed was Master Tiddler with the custom he had met with, and so charmed in heart and mind by the draughts of strong beer, that at the conclusion of the sale he set down his almost empty chest, and danced upon it with such emphasis that the lid gave way, and let him in with a crash on all that remained, and that was but his every-day or working apparel. The bran new suit of clothes he had only that morning put on was assumed for the passing festival. Loud laughed the crowd, and louder laughed the pedler, at picking up from his broken box the clothes he

offered them for sale; and many a joke was cast among the married women as to who was best entitled to the breeches. No one bid for the garments, so the pedler picked up his damaged box and adjusted his shoulder-straps, and commencing the most wild, dancing sort of gambols, to make his friends laugh (for his periodical visits had made him friends with all), he shouted, "May the King of the Peak live for ever!" and amidst the plaudits and adieux of all he took his leave, and went off by an unfrequented path that led by a shorter cut to the little town of Bakewell, continuing his grotesque sort of dancing gait as long as he was in sight of the crowd. He had scarce resumed a more natural progression, and entered a sequestered dell, when he was suddenly met, face to face, in the narrow path by a man, whose features were partly hidden by a slouched hat and the high fold of a cloak.

"Stay," he said, "Master Pedler; thou mayest perhaps be of service to me in this masquerading. But whose clothes hast thou got in that trunk of thine?"

At first the hand of the pedler, when thus he was suddenly stopped, had sought the hilt of a dagger which he had concealed in a sheath within his vest, for robbers were rife at that period, and

the pedler had money; but in a moment his well-practised eye saw the mistake in the first idea, and he doffed his hat with considerable civility to his questioner. "No, good Sir Knight, I have no wares left; they have cleaned me out up there" (casting his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of Haddon Hall); "and I have nothing for sale but the new suit I stand up in, which I only put on but just now for the occasion. I will sell that suit, and gladly, for it ill becomes me. It is as good material—may Heaven bless your honour!—as anything you can wear; and yet it's the dress of a pedler."

"I'll have the suit," replied the Knight, or whatever he was; "it will do for the masked ball: so hie thee under the bushes and doff it as quickly as thou canst. Rig thyself out in thine every-day things, and say the price between us."

Master Tiddler very soon complied, muttering to himself as he dressed, "I've tumbled on my legs to-day, and out of all my breeches. I never did so well afore, naked as my trade has left me. Wish I had brought a dozen suits!" When, emerging from the brambles and thorns with the new suit on his arm, he named an exorbitant price, and got it. His customer then rolled the things up, put them under his cloak, and bade

the pedler come at nine of the morrow to him at Chatsworth: he then disappeared. Somehow or other, but Master Tiddler could not tell why, no sooner had he crowned his day's work with this, his unexpected and most prosperous deal, than the joy over his riches deserted him, and he felt as if in parting with those clothes he had sold the very sun out of the evening sky. "That blessed strong beer has got out of me!" exclaimed Tiddler to himself: "I've got a stoup too low uncommon soon. I must on to the hostelrie at Bakewell, and refresh my inward man."

"Hold!" cried a deep, sonorous voice, close to his ear, as a strong hand was struck upon his shoulder. "Hold, Master Pedler! my excellent friend! What hast thou left in thy box that I may buy?"

On thus being again and so suddenly accosted, the pedler's nerves unaccountably left him; his hand failed in any effort to seek his dagger, and he stood before the knit brows and dark eyes of his questioner with knees knocking together, his mouth open, a picture of an embodied panic.

"Answer me, man! dost thou not hear? What hast thou got that I may buy? I want a suit of clothes."

"Holy M—m—m—mother!" cried Tiddler,

“here’s as many customers as carvers about the Hall to-day. Clo—clo—clothes, did you say, sir? The Lord help me! I’ve none but what I stand in, as I’m a honest pedler, though you may say there is no such thing. I sold the only new suit I had to a Knight in this very wood.”

“To a Knight!” cried the dark, tall man, with flashing eyes; “how didst thou know it was a Knight? No lies, Sir Pedler! or I’ll slit thy weasand. To whom didst thou sell that suit?”

The pedler, who at all other times was an able man of his hands, and of approved courage, still felt so utterly prostrated before the eyes that seemed to look through him, that he hesitated; but at last replied,—“Oh, the suit, good gentleman! the suit was bought for the masquerade.”

“Was it!” cried the stranger; “and by whom?”

The pedler was dumb.

“Who by, villain? hast thou lied so much that for once thou canst not tell a simple truth? I ask thee, who bought it?”

“Oh, but if I tell,” rejoined the bewildered pedler, “the gist of the thing will be lost; for the suit, doubtless, is for disguise at the masque, and you will know who comes as the pedler.”

“Out upon thy folly, fool! I’m not going among the dancers; but I’m curious only to

know who bought a suit of clothes in a wood like this?"

"Well, then," returned Tiddler, "if you must know, I sold the clothes, I think, to Sir John Manners. I don't think that he knew me, but I think I knew him by the shape of his head, for I had seen him at my Lord Devonshire's at Chatsworth. But, sir, you won't show me up? he must want them for disguise."

"I show thee up! no, no, Master Pedler, I'm not going to show thee up;" and the stranger's breast heaved as if with tumultuous feeling. "Thou art a good man, the best man I have seen to-day, and here's a piece of money: now away." Having said this, the dark stranger struck off among the trees, to the great comfort of the poor pedler, who, staring vacantly at the piece of money in his hand, exclaimed, "Deary me! odds, scraps, and cuttings! first I sell my suits because I've got 'em, and then I sell them alike whether I have them or no! Deary me! well, well, Scraps, but this is a day such as I have never seen afore; may Heaven grant that nothing comes of it, though the strong beer's all out, and I feel as if terribly cast down: my stomach's shreds all over!"

Timidly on his lonely path, and stopping to listen every moment, and to peer into the dark behind

him, as if in dread of some arm about to administer a fearful blow, Master Tiddler sped on his way, till, on emerging from the wood, the distant glimmer of the few lights then shown in the hamlet of Bakewell cheered his heart, and seemed to bring back some of the strength of the King of the Peak's strong beer. "Woe is me!" murmured the pedler to himself, "but dark places conjure up gloomy thoughts! I hope nothing may come of it. I could have sworn that there was an arm behind me going to dash out my brains. Shreds and patches, bless the heart that's mine! Sir Tiddler, as I often calls myself, don't thee be cast down; man often thinks there's summat going to happen, as never does come nigh. So now for the Pig and Whistle, a drop more beer, and my biggest box; for there I've duds the Lord Devonshire himself might wear, and some on 'em shall go to Chatsworth to-morrow's blessed morn."

CHAPTER XVI.

ATTEMPTS ON THE LIFE OF GEORGE III.

ON the 14th or 15th of May—the May preceding the February of 1800, in which I first saw the light—a Grenadier Battalion of the Foot Guards were being reviewed by his Majesty in person, when a shot was fired, nobody knew by whom ; and according to the report in the press of the day, the ball entered the thigh of a Mr. Ongley, but missing the bone at the femoral artery, the military surgeon on the field immediately examined and dressed the wound, and pronounced it to be of no danger. Immediately after the fall of Mr. Ongley every man's cartouch-box was examined, but no cartridge was missed that could not be accounted for. There could be no doubt but that Mr. Ongley was on a parallel line with the King, at but twenty yards' distance from him ;

but as the ball struck Mr. Ongley before it reached his Majesty, people seized on that fact to show that it was not intended for the anointed. The Government then directed the following bulletin to be published:—

“ *May 16th, 1800.*

“ We have authority to state, that the misfortune which happened yesterday morning at the field-day of the Grenadier Battalion of Guards in Hyde Park arose from accident. A due regard to the anxiety that every individual of our Battalion feels, that this matter should be properly understood, is our inducement for giving this statement to the public.”

The press of the day goes on to state,—“ Yet if this transaction was the effect of accident, another occurrence, which took place at the Theatre, cannot be attributed to the same cause. We have to record an attempt made at Drury Lane Theatre last night, upon the sacred person and life of his Majesty.”

His Majesty had no sooner entered his box, than a man in the second row from the orchestra, at about the middle of the pit, jumped upon the seat, and drawing out a horse-pistol aimed at the King, and fired. So sudden was the action that no one had time to prevent him, but a Mr. Holroyd claimed to have knocked up the pistol from its

level. At all events, the bullet missed the King, and was found in the roof of the box. His Majesty, in the coolest way, gazed steadily at the perpetrator of this act. A universal cry then arose, to "Seize the villain !" and the would-be assassin was immediately collared and then pulled over the palisades of the orchestra, and secured behind the scenes. The pistol was found beneath the seat that had been occupied by the man.

The man having been secured the curtain rose, and the stage was filled with the actors and actresses, and others, when there was a universal call from the audience, or at least from the pit and gallery, to "show the villain." Mr. Kelly, however, not deeming the scoundrel the sort of "star" that he could legitimately use, addressed the audience, and simply assured them that he was in safe custody.

While this was going on, her Majesty and the Princesses entered the box. They all—so the press declared—burst into tears, and one of the Princesses fainted ; when at the moment the band struck up the National Anthem. The audience rose *en masse*, and joined their voices to those on the stage ; and I leave my readers to imagine the immense effect of the whole affair. The audience, after the anthem and the cheering

were over, again wanted to see the prisoner, but on the assurances of Mrs. Jordan and Banister that he was safely secured, they contented themselves thereafter with no other excitement than the play.

In the meantime Sheridan, and Mr. Wicstead the magistrate, went behind the scenes to what was called the Music-Room, and the culprit was searched ; but nothing found on him of any sort or kind. One of the band, however, who had assisted to drag the offender over the orchestra, in so doing tore open his overcoat, and discovered that he had on a regimental waistcoat, with buttons on it of the 15th Light Dragoons ; and it turned out to be the cast-off garment of an officer. He gave his name at once as “James Hadfield ;” when, on the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York entering the room, he immediately turned to the latter with the greatest effrontery and said,—
 “I know your Royal Highness ; you are a good fellow. God bless you ! I have served with you, and I got these,” (pointing to scars on his head and face), “while fighting by your side. At Lincelles I lay for three hours among the dead in a ditch, and was taken prisoner by the French. I had my arm broken by a shot, and eight sabre wounds on my head, and here I am !”

Sir William Addington, the chief magistrate, then arrived, and conducted the further examination ; when the prisoner was ultimately remanded, in order that the closest inquiries might be made respecting his character, his associates, and his sanity.

At the conclusion of the farce, the audience having again called for the National Anthem, Sheridan had these impromptu lines, written by him on the spur of the moment, put into the hands of the vocalists who sang the several solos :—

“ From every latent foe,
From the assassin's blow,
God save the King.
O'er him thine arm extend,
For Britain's sake defend
Our Father, Prince, and Friend :
God save the King.”

James Hadfield was tried on an indictment, June 26th, 1800, for high treason, and after eight hours' patient investigation was acquitted on the score of insanity, and doomed to be confined in Bedlam for his life.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ANECDOTE OR LEGEND OF FAIR HELEN — LOVE AND TERRIBLE REVENGE.

I HAVE met with an anecdote or legend, not only widely credited but quoted and written on by other pens than mine; nevertheless, as Wordsworth has decidedly made a mistake in calling the two lovers of the same lady “Bruce” and “Gordon,” so great an authority as he is having been mistaken, I have some right to doubt the correctness of others. Wordsworth’s poetical vein no doubt deemed, as all of us must do, that the names of “Bruce” and “Gordon” carried much more weight with them than those of “Bell and Heming;” but, nevertheless, the lovers whose suit and deeds I am about to recount undoubtedly bore the latter appellations.

“Helen Irving,” commonly called in her vicinity “fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lea,” a

demesne situated about two miles and a half eastward of ——, where there yet remains a fine specimen of a Roman encampment, was very beautiful, and did honour to her race, who possessed Kirkconnel up to about 1600, when it became the property of the Maxwells. Helen was tall, of a beautiful figure, with regular features of the Grecian cast, and long fair hair—of that luxuriant and silken wavy kind which makes the beholder long, or at least it makes me long, to see it slip from its confines, and fall in graceful profusion over neck and shoulders. I have often told my female friends, that if they wish to win consent to anything they ask of father, uncle, brother, or husband (mark, I confine my observation just now to the male sex), they have only to let down their back hair, breathe hard—that is, as hard as a beautiful bosom can breathe—and put on, if they can, the semblance of a tear. This advice complied with, they need not fear refusal! Helen had bright blue eyes, tenderly soft and expressive, with beautifully long eyelashes and marked eyebrows, darker than her hair seemed to warrant: in short, instead of two lovers, everybody loved who saw her! I should—you would—O male reader! but, luckily or unluckily, she lived before our time.

When I say that she had many lovers, I believe it to have been perfectly true: but out of these, some thought their chance was hopeless; others, that she was already bespoken; the rest were too terrified at the chance of a refusal to speak: so out of the ruck, as they say on a race-course, came two heroes — one of the name of Heming, and the other called Bell, and they tried to rival each other in elegant exercises, many performances, soft sayings, and devoted and constant adoration; but not with similar good fortune. There was a wide difference between the two young men who sought her hand. Heming was a handsome, athletic youth, fond of the horse and hound, the gun and fishing-rod, gracing them with other more refined accomplishments, but none of the latter to any very great extent. Bell, his rival, was of a more slender figure, and though attached to rural sports by mountain, loch, and river, he had perfected himself to a high degree in the lute, in singing, and in the dances of his country, with some little foreign infusion into his steps. More than once he had ventured on a sneer at the perfections of Heming — perfections in no way meriting contempt — and perhaps by this very blunt method of cutting out a rival, for there is

nothing the noble, gentle heart of woman hates so much as detracting or backbiting, he had commenced to mar the very success he was anxious to attain. Heming, on the contrary, when speaking of Bell, did so in a fair and praiseful manner; and when he could not praise, was silent.

However a suitor really in love much dislikes to resign the loved one into the hands of another, and while she is yet single, and as was then, and as it is now the fashion, deemed to be fickle; though Bell against his will saw that Heming was preferred to him, nevertheless, against his own innate convictions he contrived to press his suit, and to create displeasure instead of love in the breast of her he so much admired, and then so foolishly persecuted.

Time, that disposer of events and discloser of human desires, was not very old before it made not only the inhabitants of the district, but Bell himself, acquainted with the hopelessness of his pretensions, and Bell and everybody saw that the affections of fair Helen were fairly and indisputably won. Matters, however, had not gone so far but that the two suitors and the object of their solicitude were at times associated together; and though for hours and days despairing, the rejected Bell, at some kind word or look, would

become madly emboldened to hope that even yet his chances were not entirely gone, but that there remained a liking still lurking in Helen's breast at least for his good looks—for he was not unhandsome—and his superior accomplishments.

On one of those days, when Helen's sweet glance had fallen upon him kindly, but more in pity than admiration, he had presented her with a little bouquet of flowers, which she, more in civility than anything else, received at his hand, and was holding in hers, when Heming, with a look as if well assured that he might do anything, took the flowers from her hand and gave them to his dog to carry. He did this all in apparent good humour, and without an insulting look at his rival, and as if in play; when Bell, in a state of ungovernable fury, demanded why he touched those flowers, and attempted to take them from the dog. The dog, too faithful to give up anything assigned to him by his master, resented this by fixing his teeth in the clothes of Bell, who then, having no sword on, drew a knife, and was about to revenge himself, when Heming interfered, and the two young men closed together, and wrestled for possession of the knife, Heming refusing to draw his sword because his opponent was not similarly armed. The dog,

then seeing his master assaulting and assaulted, flew to the rescue ; and this time, and before his master could prevent it, lacerated the arm of Bell. The struggle lasted not long ; the superior strength and skill of Heming triumphed, and he flung Bell upon the ground with the knife in Heming's possession. Powerless to compete with Heming, and harmless, having no weapon, Bell rose from the sand on which he had fallen, and shaking his fist at his successful rival, rushed into a thicket of trees. Helen had been much alarmed at this violence ; but she knew who was the aggressor, and it took some time ere Heming could tranquillize her mind, and soothe her to her usual quietude. The day had been sunnily beautiful, and every wild flower of the season in each nook and corner was out in perfection, and from the banks of the bright little stream, called the Rivole, the "forget-me-nots" stooped and clustered to kiss or to view their pretty hues in the mirror-like water beneath them. Up the banks of this gracefully winding stream, and beneath the cool shade of the trees on its banks, the lovers took their way. The cushat cooed above their heads, as Walter Scott has sung, "in notes of peace, and rest, and love," and the placidity of beautiful nature won its way to their hearts,

and banished every sensation but that of loving and being beloved again.

At a turn of the river, and on the other side of it, there most suddenly appeared a terrible sight,—a man so worked upon by demoniac rage and jealousy, that for a moment neither fair Helen nor her lover recognised his features; but his dress and his arm were torn, and from the limb there were traces of blood. In this appearance, then, they recognised the jealous and the—before the eyes of his heroine—discomfited Bell, and ere they had an instant in which to think, Helen saw that he had levelled a short hand-gun at her lover's heart, and in her fond frenzy to save his life at the risk of her own, she threw her arms round Heming and covered him from aim by her sweet form. That loud, that horrible, that accursed report of the gun, then rang through the silent, the listening, and outraged air; with a shriek, fair Helen fell lifeless on her lover's neck, and the cowardly assassin fled in expectation of, and to avoid the expected vengeance, or to escape detection: for it is doubted if he thoroughly knew that his bullet had “deceived” him. Heming knew his love was dead, and laying her down softly by the side of the stream, and drawing his sword, he dashed through the water and com-

menced pursuit; when, overtaking Bell, he plunged his sword through his back, and killed him on the spot.

In the churchyard to the northward of the chapel there still stands a stone impressed with the cross, and some people assert that that stone marks the spot where fair Helen fell; but I have doubts of this, and so had—and so they may have still—the villagers, for they point to an old thorn-tree on the banks of the Rivole as the spot where the murder was committed, and say that the stone with the cross is fair Helen's grave. Besides this, the rude cross on the stone perfectly agrees with the rude sculpture hard by on Heming's undoubted gravestone; and in addition to this, the grave of fair Helen is not within "hand-gun" distance of the river, on the other side of which the murderer certainly stood. The grave of Bell is also pointed out, as well as Heming's grave. The top of the latter, containing a portion of the rudely carved cross, is broken off; but there yet remains, or did some time ago remain, the word "Heming," the Christian name and date totally obliterated.

The characters in which the name is traced are very old, and could scarce have been of later date than the early part of Queen Mary's reign.

Pennant, as well as Wordsworth, have given this tale; but as I have taken some trouble about it, and never having seen either Pennant or Wordsworth's version of it, I do not hesitate to place this anecdote before my readers, in the bold hope, perhaps, that it will yet be interesting to those who have not been conversant with the tale when handled by cleverer pens than mine.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON SHOOTING AND HUNTING—NOBLE LORDS, THEIR DOGS,
THEIR METHODS, AND THEIR MEN.

AMONG the amusing anecdotes of “the Upper Ten Thousand,” I know not where I have witnessed more than in the *battue*, as it is now termed, or what used to be the “shooting-day.” I have lived long enough to remember, and to look back on with regret that it has passed away, the old-fashioned shooting-day, when the Lord of the Castle, Court, or Hall, went out in September, alone, or at most with one friend, with a flint-lock gun and one or a brace of pointers or setters. My father’s “Squa” was the first setter I remember, and his two first pointers that I knew were “Bell” and “Nero.” None of these dogs were well or highly broken, but they were steady on their game ; and, after some hallooing

to, would wait for the gun to be reloaded. I do not remember that there was any dropping to hand, or waiting for the word to "seek dead." "Beaters" and "stops" were unknown in my earliest boyhood, and retrievers hardly ever kept. If a dog pointed, I remember the masters and keepers all called out "To-ho!" and I believe it was intended to steady the dog on his point, or to bring the attention of the second dog that had not yet seen the point to it, and to cause him to back.

Since those days, if a dog of mine has not seen his companion make the point, I cry a sharp "Ho!" and holding up my hand, I have taught my dogs to know that it means a point, or that they should "down;" and they drop or back, one or the other, at the word. My father at Cranford, in October, sent Admiral Prescott out with a favourite old pointer to shoot pheasants, when in those good old days, and before the importation and invention of foreign or new-fangled manures were known, the potato-haulm gave thick cover up to a man's knees; and the steady old pointer played the Admiral a trick.

The dog followed him, or rather the gun lent him by my father, very well, and made several points, to all of which, when the pheasants

rose, the Admiral missed. So, after four or five misses, the dog tried to spring on and catch the pheasant before he rose; evidently having come to the opinion, that if he did not do so the Admiral's bag would be very small. Failing to catch the last two or three pheasants himself, on the Admiral again missing the old pointer treated the gaiter of the gunner to an act of the most significant contempt, and scratching two or three times in the mould with his hinder legs, and growling, the old dog betook himself home, leaving the Admiral speechless with rage at the misses he had made, and with what he had called the d——d impertinence of his lordship's dog, as well as the badness of the gun.

There was another noble Lord, of a later date, not a hundred miles from Ringwood, who had on his estate a very good snipe-bog; so he ordered the bog to be kept quiet, and for his sport exclusively. Having resolved to take to snipe-shooting, he ordered a pair of immense jack-boots, similar to those which had won the prize for the maker at the Crystal Palace; and one fine day, attended by two or three keepers, he started for the bog, to shoot, as he thought, in comfort, and to his heart's content. Now it so happened that these huge jack-boots were made to come up to the hips, and

therefore, to give the limbs freedom of action, they yawned at the top with huge interstices, and the more so because his lordship had not fastened them to their full height with straps. Into the bog, however, went the noble earl; up got snipes, and left and right, in double shots, the gun was soon in action. All at once the noble foot felt a sharp, grating pain, as if it trod on small flints or pebble-stones, when, in angrily wrenching the foot and leg about, down went my lord, and his yawning boots became chock-full with mud and slush. True to their maker's fame, the boots would neither let water in nor out; and, what was more, the tight sucking of the full boot increased to agony the extraordinary pains in both feet. The noble earl could not bear it, so he left the bog and floundered on to dry land. "Here!" he shouted to his head-keeper, "pull off this d——d boot!"

Now I have no doubt but that my readers will believe that a favourite way with serving-men to get off a boot that, from being wet, sticks firmly to the foot, is, to turn their backs to the leg to be operated on, and, taking the foot between their thighs, to walk it straight off. In this way the keeper seized his lord's foot; but the boot, for some time, resisted every effort to move it: when

it did begin to move, however, ever so little, the exploded caps that his lordship had dropped into the yawning orifice above, grated on the flesh, and caused more pain than ever.

With the idle and still booted foot, that was left for use at will, the noble earl lashed out full on the thus presented rear of the stooping figure, and with such emphatic force that the keeper flew forward several yards on his knees and face, bestriding a huge boot broomstick or witch-fashion ; the boot leaving the foot of the peer with a pop that sounded like a gigantic cork from a monstrous bottle of ginger-beer. The noble earl then mounted his pony and rode home in one boot, and in a frame of temper not of the most gentle kind.

The late Lord Anglesey hated to have any one observe or make remarks on his actions in the field ; and at his hands a clergyman, who was invited to shoot with him, received the following rebuke, or quaint reply, whichever the reader likes to call it. In walking by the side of his lordship's pony, on looking at the noble lord's gun, which rested across the pommel of the saddle, the worthy divine in some surprise remarked,—“Your gun is on full cock, my Lord!”

“Damn me, sir,” was the reply, “it's the very

first thing I do in my dressing-room of a morning!"

But to return to anecdotes of the present method of sporting, in comparison with those of a former day. Instead of going forth accompanied by pointers or setters to see their wondrous performances in stubble and turnip-fields, the fashion is for the host of the day to go forth with an army of keepers and beaters—perhaps from three to five keepers, each with a retriever at his heels more or less broken to the work, and from ten to a dozen or more of beaters hired for the occasion. To shoot to this army of followers there may be from three to six gunners, each with either a breech-loader, or, in its stead, two muzzle-loaders; while an army of boys as "markers," or, more properly speaking, as "scarers," for they are armed with long poles, to the ends of which are attached white flags, attend to frighten the partridges from flying in one direction. The stubbles having been previously driven by the keepers, and the birds all marked into the Swedes and turnips, and the flag-boys placed at given distances, a line of gunners and beaters is then formed to march over the ground, wheeling occasionally to enable the line to compass it all, and the fun—so it can only be called, because it does not rank as sport—begins.

It then becomes a curious reflection to a cool and considerate mind, to think upon all that has been done to gain an immense number of shots at the partridges; and then to see all that is done diametrically opposite to the success of the first intention.

Now, we know—that is, all *real sportsmen* know—that if there is one thing more than another which prevents partridges from lying well, or snipes either, it is *the sound of the human voice*.

I have known this all my life, and, out of curiosity, have tried the effect of the human voice even among the wild and distant herds of the bison on the plains of the Far West. I have tried it in the midst of a herd of old bulls. The bulls invariably form, as it were, the rear-guard of the herd; regulating their pace by that of the young cows and heifers, who lead the way. In a very short time the herd, in its galloping retreat, gets into a long string of animals, a young light heifer or two at the head; other animals, of both sexes, following them, in twos or threes deep, with a broader phalanx of old bulls bringing up the rear. In a very short time the heifers at the head of the column forget that they are pursued; and, in consequence, they gradually slacken their

pace. You and your brother-hunters all this time may be attacking the old bulls, and kill or wound one or two; but the noise of rifle or pistol is drowned in the sullen, hollow roll of heavy hoofs: pace is regulated by those that are under no immediate terror. And hence the long, "lol-losing" gallop, goes on without intermission. I have more than once wounded, passed by, and left to my followers, or to return to if needed, a disabled bull; and taken up the chase again, and got intermixed with the vanguard of bulls—as much as I dared do. You should always take care not to get in front of these sullen old boys, who keep leering so suspiciously from beneath their horns; as much as to say, "Just get in my way, and see if I'm not down on you!" For if they get you in that fix, and three or four charged in *échelon*, there would be no sort of doubt what would happen to your horse, even if you escaped with your life: for a bison bull can get into the full speed of his rush at you, in less time than you can spur your horse to the tip-top speed of his retreat. Thus placed, and in the midst of bisons, I have suddenly shouted, and most curious it was to see the way in which the old bulls on the instant scattered; just as if each individual for the moment had been scared out of his wits.

Of course, in a few more strides they joined again, and continued their retreat as before; the etiquette among them being to regulate their speed by that of the cows.

Having thus shown the effect of the human voice on the huge and savage, and, if driven to it, sagaciously and boldly-fighting beast, I leave my readers to judge of the effect of it on timid birds. I will, as it were, now make myself one of the shooting-party in the turnip-fields, and state what usually happens. The anecdote is applicable to ninety-nine such cases out of the hundred. The line is formed and we begin to advance, to a sort of running tune, consisting of a treble and base; yelps of pain from refractory retriever dogs, whose backbones and ribs are curiously subjected to constant drumming on by the heavy sticks or knotted whips of the keepers; suddenly the host, ere we have gone twenty yards, cries "Halt!" and we all stand still.

Host (to the head-keeper, at the top of his voice).—"Those boys are in the wrong place!"

Keeper. "They be where you told me to put 'em."

"I never told you any such thing!"

"'Twas Bill as told me where you told him I was to put 'em."

Bill. “ No; I told’y t’other way.”

Host. “ They ought to be on the hedge-bank of the field beyond.”

Three or four keepers all at once. “ Boys, get to t’other hedge!”

All the boys in shrill screams. “ Can’t hear what’y do say!”

Keepers shout and beckon. Boys not being able to understand for the purpose of receiving orders, flags in hand commence to charge through the unbeaten ground where the partridges are. Host, gunners, keepers, and beaters in full chorus, — “ Damn the boys! all back!” The boys, at a loss what to do, stand still among the coveys; the coveys, from being all driven together, had commenced to fight among themselves, as coveys will *not* always fraternise. A bird beaten by those among whom he has been driven rises to fly away. Three or four beaters cry out “ Mark!” Three or four more birds rise, and six or eight beaters scream out “ Mark!” Partridges all over the field, finding themselves in the midst of human uproar, either at the feet of the bewildered boys or in front of the line of gunners, rise up, calling here, there, and everywhere. The line is ordered on; an independent fusilade of but a few moments takes place; and a field of fifty acres of

Swedes, as high as a man's knee, affords no more sport than one of four acres properly assaulted.

Now it often has occurred to me, and still occurs to me when such things happen, what a strange fact it is that a man in power, and a sensible man too, having all at his command, should put himself to enormous cost and trouble to give to himself and friends an immense number of shots and a heavy bag of birds; and then, when all such costly arrangements are made and entered into, men commanded and things powerfully ordained, that he should at the last moment be unable to control the thing most within his power, and which, if not controlled, militates most against success—I mean, his own voice, and that of his friends and dependants. But so it is, and so I firmly believe it ever will be throughout the modern fashion of beating for partridges. True, when birds are in thousands, or nearly millions, such as may be seen in the great partridge countries, it is possible to get up to any amount of birds, simply because the birds are so numerous they cannot get out of your way, and if you get up to a quarter of them, you may shoot your gun red-hot; but this noisy system will not do where partridges by comparison are scarce: and host and friend, the two together,

would have infinitely better sport if they shot to a brace of well-broken good dogs, and, without having any fields driven, and went and found a covey of birds, *marked that covey only, and instantly followed it up*. Scattered birds *will* lie, and scattered birds will lead you into others, and scatter them; and if you will not talk, nor halloo to your dogs, nor whistle—which latter is the greatest mistake of all—you will spring your birds at your foot instead of having rises at forty or fifty yards. If you never talk nor whistle when birds are in turnips, they are not aware of your immediate presence, because they cannot see you over the tops of the high turnips—they can only hear your step; and as a cow or a horse walking through the turnips would make, as the birds very well know, much the same noise, they do not at once comprehend that an imminent danger from their most fatal enemy, man, is so near.

Those little ivory “tiddling” Cockney whistles that the generality of gunners—I will not call them sportsmen—carry, have become so thoroughly known to the *feræ natura* when man is pursuing them, as the herald of his approach, that a tiddling tremulous whistle of the kind will set a whole forest of game, or farms on farms of game,

running. Just as the too-tooing horn of the late Osbaldiston, on whom the lines in Leicestershire were made that ran thus,—

“ This is the man just come from Quorn,
Who lost his fox by blowing his horn,”

would render every gorse cover or wood down wind of him a blank. And just as the as continuously used but louder horn of the late Lord Fitzhardinge did in the gorses and woods of the vale of Berkeley around Berkeley Castle, the use or abuse of which caused the old gamekeeper, John Powell, to come to me to ask me to ask his Lordship “not to play on his wind instrument so much,” as Powell said, “It gets I blamed for having no foxes.” My reply was, that “I knew the mischief of it well enough, but I might just as well ask old Lindley to resign his famous double bass, or Paganini to cease from his famous fiddle, as to expect my brother to give up “touching his horn.” I have seen our excellent huntsman, Harry Ayris—one of the best of all good servants in the world—wild at the annoyance and mischief occasioned by his lord’s horn with a few tail hounds, while Harry was touching his horn at the head, to “get ’em up together,” any inter-

mediate hound, of course, stopping in his race to reach the first, on account of the—to him—puzzling note “too-tooing” in his rear. All my life I have seen this kind of personal folly existing, and this impossibility to abstain from useless noise among those who ought to have known better. As the voice of a really useful hound or dog of any kind ought to speak the note of intelligence to his master, so ought with hounds the huntsman’s horn to convey to the pack, or to individuals of the pack, what was required of their services and worthy of their attention.

If by chance I saw wild-fowl while out with my setters, and set to work to stalk or creep to them on my hands and knees, the setters, without a word, would draw close at my heels or back me, and be just as well aware of what I was doing, and that they must be cautious and quiet, as I was myself. No speaking, no whistling, no drumming with unmerciful sticks or knotted whips on their sides to enforce obedience, and frighten every living thing: the dogs were taught to understand me and what I was about; they took as much care to attain the purpose in view as I did, and delighted in success with a similar avidity; and with them it was far pleasanter to sport than with a dozen beaters, who put up

everything far and near by trampling and by noise.

In proof of the natural beauty of the sport with dog and gun, I now narrate an incident which happened to me in the New Forest with one of my setters, then a young dog in his first season. He was ranging, as he ever ranged, with the long but cautious gallop of his race, and coming close up-wind of a snipe flushed it; but the snipe not being aware of man's presence, simply flew a few yards out of his way and pitched again. "Chalk" dropped when the bird rose, but having marked him to the ground, not being more than ten yards from him, rose to his point again. On seeing this, though at a long distance, I commenced to walk up, when in my way I nearly trod on a rabbit, which I then killed. At the noise of the gun "Chalk" dropped to down charge, watched me pick up the rabbit, and then, on seeing me coming towards him, rose steadily to his point again, and the snipe also fell to the gun. How I caressed the young dog, showing him the snipe and letting him kiss it over and over again, *purposely appearing to him* to be immensely overjoyed to get it, I leave to my readers to imagine; my doctrine with dogs

of all kinds having ever been to let them *learn from me, and rule themselves by my apparent feelings and desires*, not through intimidation, brutality, and blows.

CHAPTER XIX.

A COMFORTABLE DINNER IN THE RANKS OF "THE UPPER
TEN THOUSAND" ON A FRIDAY IN THE YEAR 1800—
CONVERSATION, WINE, AND WEAPONS.

AT that period there was about town one "Mr. Peter Abbott," who was frequently a companion of all those that in those days would be called "fast men," and often invited out to dinner. Now a dinner dressed by a good cook, and flanked by old wine, with an agreeable friend, in a handsome house, is a very comfortable thing, and when our bosom's lord is not apprehensive of danger, nor depressed with any fear of consequences from indigestion or violence, over-eating, over-drinking, or over-love-making and rash promises, I do not know under what circumstances a man can feel himself more jolly.

On this occasion Mr. Peter Abbott had been asked to dine in Baker Street, *tête-à-tête* with Lord Camelford; and as, very unfortunately, is but

too often the case, the conversation turned on acts of gallantry. What it was, and as to whom, I have never had it explained ; but Mr. Peter Abbott, who, I believe, was generally a very quiet, unwarlike little man, as much free of the passion of the age for duelling as any peaceful citizen could be, said something, of the purport of which I believe he himself was not fully aware, that gave his noble entertainer the most dire offence.

Lord Camelford at once was what is called "shut up," but though he was silent he said not a word in regard to having taken any offence ; but, after coffee and liqueur had been served, with great apparent affability offered to take Mr. Peter Abbott to his home in his carriage. Mr. Abbott gladly accepted this offer, and on the announcement of his Lordship's carriage being at the door, the host waved him in and followed. The coachman, when they were in, drove off as if by instinct, no orders to him having been heard ; and after a time Mr. Peter Abbott began to think that his house was further from Baker Street than it used to be, and to settle the point he frequently asked his Lordship "where he was going to first, before setting him down at his own door?" A very short as well as evasive answer was all he received in reply ;

but when they had lost sight of the row of lamps, and had driven well out into suburban or rural darkness, he again repeated, and with more emphasis, the question of "where they were driving to?"

"Why, I'll tell you the fact, sir," answered his Lordship: "some expressions you made use of at dinner-time conveyed so much reflection on my character, that I could not let the matter pass unnoticed. I have therefore here" (producing them as he spoke) "a couple of swords and a brace of pistols—you can select your own weapon;" when at that moment the carriage stopped, and they were on Acton Green.

"Now then, sir, come out," said his Lordship, taking him by the arm as they descended the steps together; "we will have it out here."

This not being in the least agreeable to the astonished guest of the dinner-party, on seeing a light in a neighbouring farm-house window, after a slight struggle, in which he freed himself from the unprepared grasp of his companion, who had no idea that his friend could have any objection to such a mode of finishing a pleasant evening, he made a bolt, and ran like a deer for the light in the house previously referred to; his Lordship chasing him and calling him to come back, for all

the cowards that ever disgraced the name of gentleman. Bump against the door, to the inordinate astonishment of the rustics, went Peter Abbott; and as the door flew open, in on his nose after him fell Lord Camelford, two swords under an arm and a pistol-case in hand. Up jumped his Lordship, and with the unoccupied hand he seized Mr. Peter Abbott. But Abbott clung to the chimneypiece, tables, and chairs, and resisted with every tenacity of purpose, till the farmer and his sons interfered, and saved the victim, while they — no easy task! — induced Lord Camelford to retire.

The next day the transaction got bruited abroad, and Mr. Peter Abbott having consulted with his friends, the necessary information was laid, and they sent Townsend, the Bow-street runner, off with a warrant for Lord Camelford's immediate apprehension; and he was brought from his house in Baker Street before the "Justice," Mr. Ford, for a private examination. Lord Camelford had some difficulty in procuring bail, but at last Lord Valentia, and a Captain of the Navy whose name I do not remember, became his securities: these two sureties were bound over in 2000*l.* each, and Lord Camelford himself in 4000*l.*, to answer for the assault.

Now as Lord Camelford had shot a Lieutenant Peterson in the West Indies for mutiny, in which act a court martial at Martinique, which he had demanded of Captain Mitford, had justified him, and as Mitford had at the time of the court martial written to the Admiral of the station, stating that in his opinion the misunderstanding between Lord Camelford and this Mr. Peterson originated in a good deal of ill blood between them, Lord Camelford treasured up a *casus belli* against the Captain; and on his return to England Lord Camelford sent him a challenge. Captain Mitford declined to accept the challenge, on the score of duty; so when Lord Camelford met him in Bond Street he hissed him, and called him a coward; and then Captain Mitford applied for a criminal information against him in the Court of King's Bench, which was granted. By this it will be seen that Lord Camelford's death in a duel, sooner or later, might reasonably be expected.

CHAPTER XX.

ESSEX IN THE OLDEN TIME—THE HERETIC—THE FIRE, THE
FAGOT, AND THE LOVE OF WOMAN.

PART I.

OF all the counties wherein I have spent many happy hours, I know of none that are better to be remembered by me than the woods and fields of graceful Essex. Graceful by the graces of the fair sex; and, to a sportsman, joyous from its wealth of rural recreation, from the amount of its game, its wild fowl, and the stoutness of its foxes. There is a freshness about its fields, and in the spring time in regard to its wild flowers, that to me is charming. The clustering primrose there in the hedgerow banks and in the copses, seems to wear a brighter hue than usual, while the marshmallow that decks the lower meads, and the course of its springs as they struggle through the thickets, bears, if possible, a brighter and more golden tint than the mallow of other places.

Essex is a lovely county now, during the days of my life ; but my present business lies not with its scenes as they are, but as they were about the year 1555.

Such of my readers as are acquainted with the town of Brentwood, or have even passed through it, may have remarked the ruin of an old elm-tree standing on one side of the high-road by the foot-way. It is quite dead ; nothing but the gnarled bark of its huge trunk remains, and the looker-on is puzzled as to what can have befallen this giant of the forest : for, so to speak, its stomach is full of stones and bricks ! In short, with an idea of protecting it, the people of the vicinity have walled up its inside ; there is no “heart” of elm left in it ; and it reminds one of a distempered dream, in which one sees an old tree tottering home to some loved or rural site, having taken a good deal too much of bricks and mortar.

For a long time the sheltering case of this patriarch of “last great coats” stood widely open, and could contain in their hours of romping play a score and more of little boys and girls ; besides this, perhaps, a rumour crept about that there were Roman Catholic priests of the present day who would have “kicked up the cantrip of the de’il” inside that elm, if they could have up-

rooted the hellish witness of their horrible barbarity in the olden time, and sent it to the same ordeal in which they had consumed a living soul. A siege carried on against the dead old remnant of a mighty tree, with no more destructive means than little boys and girls, was a siege without end; amazingly ruinous as children are to everything that is nice and beautiful, yet as against the remnant of a giant tree, eight yards in circumference, their efforts were likely to continue futile. Be that as it may, a suspicion is said to have arisen among the followers of the Established Church in Brentwood, that their Roman Catholic neighbours—neighbours to themselves, but closer neighbours to the tree—on the spot, intended some windy night to work a miracle and to blow it down. To brave any storm of bell, book, and candle, beads, benediction, blasphemy, and paternoster, the Protestants resolved to protect the tree, so they walled up its inside by masonry most effectually!

There still stands the tree, where it has stood for 800 years or more—a sin mark, venerably vicious from the horrible fact that years ago it saw enacted beneath its boughs.

I must now convey the reader to the bright green fields in the immediate vicinity of the village.

of Charing. All the inhabitants of London city were gone forth “a-maying,” as it was then called; or, in other words, to collect the blossom of the thorn from the hedges and thickets, for it was the first of the olden May in the days of Queen Mary.

A lovely afternoon it was, and many a ‘prentice lad and many a pretty girl thought of and talked of happier things than merely picking bloom; and far away from his fellows young William Hunter, then not very long passed the age of nineteen, wandered away with his cousin, and they sat themselves down beneath a clump of trees.

Though at that rather early age, young Hunter fancied himself in love — and he was in love, too; aye, more in love than millions of men have been since, at double his time of life. For the first time in *his* life, at all events, *he* felt *the* passion. It came on him in all its novelty and unalloyed force. It was as the tree in the maiden soil, as the sun would seem could a hitherto irrevocably blind man open his eyes and look on the god of light for the first time. That which he felt *was* a boy’s first love: it *was* love, it had nothing to do with lust; it was tenderness, even fear; it was more than mere worship, it was gentle, heartfelt, soul-felt, ecstatic adoration! He saw her, he heard her,

was in her presence, unfettered by the vicinity of others ; he neither cared for nor thought of anything else ; life was in her name, and his existence centred in the words, " Constance June."

It is the fashion in these days to sneer or to laugh at the passion of what is called " a boy," and to deem it light and fickle ; whereas it is really the unalloyed spring of affection, the unpolluted well, the first flower from the stem, the first wave of the pure fountain, the first dewdrop on the field at earliest morn, that until the grey dawn had known none other than the hue of night.

Hunter's cousin (for they were thus related) sat by his side, with the May blossoms in her lap. She was but one year his senior, though she did not look to be so much ; for though her *petite* figure was symmetry and grace itself, it was, or it looked to be, slight—too slight for what is called the gently-rounded contour of beauty. Her dark, very dark hair, had escaped its confines, and had fallen on her shoulders. But dark and glossy as that hair was, her eyes, by contrast, made it look light ; so deeply hued were they, so dark, so soft, and yet so beamingly effulgent.

At the moment at which I entreat my reader's notice the faces of the two were turned each to

each, and hand-in-hand they sat; their eyes *not* on the gathered flowers.

“ Yes, William,” she said, “ I know it: I have forsworn the Romish faith; for, young as I am, my eyes have been opened to the irresponsible iniquities of the asserted-to-be-infallible Church. But why, why, dearest cousin, should you be ruled by me? Why should you, unless you have conviction equally strong as mine, why should you fly from your father’s faith and quarrel with your master?”

“ My conviction, dearest Constance! dearest love! is strong as yours,” replied her lover. “ Irrespective of my desire to do as you do, I cannot bear to yield me a willing and a blind slave to priestly tyranny. I have only, as yet, refused to attend mass; and I am, as you may say, simply in a course of self-investigation. I have a right to think; and surely every one has a right to select the means by which he shall save his soul alive? So nothing that they *can* say or do shall drive me from what *I call* religious freedom, or a right to investigation. It is this resolve of mine, and my refusal to attend mass, that has induced the master to whom I am apprenticed to order me to return to-morrow to my father at Brentwood. He says, if I do not attend mass I shall bring him into

trouble; he has been kind to me, and he seems to view my thinking for myself in no very heinous light. But as he deems his own safety is concerned in what his apprentice does, why to Brentwood I am resolved to go."

"Dearest William," replied Constance, "I do not blame your resolution. How can I, when we think alike? But nevertheless, for your—for my sake, be not rash. Take no bold step; do nothing to bring the uncharitable, the powerful, the implacable vengeance of the Romish Church upon you. Let them not make *you* a martyr, even to work their own downfall; which I am certain must come. But as you love me, and as we hope for worldly happiness, be cautious; and however we must be, for a time, severed, turn to me in your absence; think of me, and have faith in my unceasing affection."

"Well, then," said William, as he kissed her sweet lips, "the Western sky grows red. Alas, my dear Constance, we must now wend our way back to the City. Cheer up, my darling; do not let those dear, dark eyes, look as if they were melting away with a tear-drop on their lids, though the tear be a very diamond behind the fringe, that glistens like a glow-worm set in dewy night. I go into Essex, *but to live, to dream of*

you: and if I conceal the opinion that is as much master of my soul as you are mistress of my heart, my own sweet love, I do so that we *may* meet again! Cheer up, then, gentle love, and we *will* meet again!”

“William,” replied his cousin, “those words of yours fall on my ear with a weight I cannot explain. You ‘go into Essex, *but to live.*’ Great Heaven forbid that you should hasten there *to die!* And yet, William, I feel an overwhelming cloud upon my mind, that seems the herald of despair. Go—go not into Essex, William. As you love me, stay in London city.”

“Your word, sweet love, would be my law: but in this instance my object, in obedience to the command to return home, is to set matters at rest there; to convince my father that he has no cause for immediate alarm; and that being done, to induce him to send me back to my kind master, who, once eased of his apprehensions, will most kindly receive me again. Cheer up, then, love; banish those groundless fears: trust to me, and all shall yet be well. I go for the happiness of both.”

At these words, several of the “maying” parties came towards them; and they were joined by other apprentices and their female friends; and together they proceeded to the City.

On the following day William Hunter presented himself at the house of his father, in the pleasant little hamlet of Brentwood, and they had a lengthened conversation in respect to his absence from mass, in the course of which the son so far set the fears of the father at rest that he promised in a few days to send him back to his master in London, with an assurance that, however he might have deviated from his Romish duties, still his master need not be apprehensive of any violent schism, for he had promised at least to be more circumspect for the future.

Acting with due regard to the promise he had made his father, William Hunter then became a pretty constant attendant at his chapel, and he *seemed* to have satisfied Father Sneckingrass, his confessor, that there was nothing to fear as to his schism from Rome. He might have *seemed* to have set at rest the suspicions of the priest, but it is a part of the education of the Romish priesthood to *seem* exactly that which *they are not* ; and the eyes of Father Sneckingrass, which at one moment regarded him with apparent approbation, on the next, when William Hunter was *not* looking at him, twinkled with a low distrustful cunning, that bespoke a resolve to doubt, and to watch him with the stealthy vigilance of a cat.

Father Sneckingrass was rather a fat, sleek, or comfortable-looking man, so far as his figure went; very bald, a few light hairs alone being left above his temples: yet, for all the weight of his figure and breadth of very splay feet, it was in his power to step when he pleased without the sound of a foot-fall, and with such a smooth-gliding motion, that not a rustle could be heard from any garment he possessed. Even in walking on the public highway he was never observed to be in a hurry, nor to be looking about him. His pace was slow and cautious, his eyes on the ground, as if expecting a snake that might be in his path; and he was never known, even when accosted, to look anybody full in the face.

Some weeks had passed since Hunter's return to his father, and all seemed to be going on smoothly and well; so much so, that a day was fixed for the apprentice to return to London city. A lad at his age, in love for the first time, as previously remarked, is, indeed, a lover to the very extent of worshipping insanity! Hunter, while in this state, could see no amusement in the usual games so much beloved by his contemporaries. Their very noise, their mirth, their conversation, disgusted him, and made him turn in thought to the soft, brilliant black eyes, beneath

the deep, but beautifully pencilled eyebrows, that could eloquently discourse to his very soul, without syllabbling a word, or seeking one from him.

On a very still and sultry afternoon, towards the end of an old-fashioned May, "when beasts did leap and birds did sing," Hunter strolled through the little village. He had gone in the earlier part of his walk to many a lovely dell, and sat down among the sweet wild flowers and fresh grass to dream, with his eyes open, of sweet Constance June! He heard the brilliant note of the happy thrush on the topmost bough, the mellow song of the blackbird amid the thorns beneath, and further away in the woods, the soft cooing of the cushat dove or wood-pigeon, in notes of "rest and love," and felt that it was a day in which to worship God, and Heaven's manifold perfections, without the aid of book or any mortal teaching.

In this frame of mind he came suddenly on the church, to him a forbidden temple. The day was very hot; the door of the church, shaded by a panoply of ivy, stood invitingly open, and such an air of cool, calm privacy and holy sanctity pervaded the place, that without a thought of wrong, without a touch of disobedience to his father, or to Father Sneckingrass, he entered the holy edifice,

and sat down in a seat, which from its locality placed him with his face towards the Communion Table, and his back to the entrance-door.

Poor youth! he thought not of wrong to any living soul; he wished for a retired spot in which to indulge in the dear thought of an all-engrossing innocent affection, intertwined in his ideas with heaven; and thus he continued some little time, when, in changing his position, on putting his hand to the bench beside him, he found it accidentally resting on a Bible.

At first inadvertently, but afterwards in deep thought, he opened and read; and reading, read on, until suddenly aroused by a heavy hand on his shoulder: on looking up he beheld the inflamed and angry countenance of the priest, who cried out, "Thou damnable heretic! thou art caught red-handed in the fact! By all the saints thou shalt smart for it! It has never been a merry world since *that* book came forth in English, and holy Church requires an example to be made, to deter others from the road to hell."

With the bound of a scared deer poor Hunter, thus surprised and exorcised, sprang up, and ere the priest could detain him he fled into the street, and on, and on, into the wild country; for he knew the heinous sin the dominant priests

would prove him guilty of, so far as the study of the forbidden book went, and he durst not meet his father. In a very short time, oppressed with fears, for he was aware of the vengeful feelings of the Romish Church, and the horror in the minds of its superiors on an apprehended or contemplated secession from its doctrines, and that even the fagot might be his doom if captured, on and on he went, without money in his pocket or a change of clothes, a poor forlorn, scared youth, and bent his course towards London city. There we must leave him, to follow his fortunes in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

HADDON HALL.—THE BALL.

PART IV.

THE morn of the eve on which the masqued ball at Haddon Hall was to take place broke on the world through a net-work of frosted silver; the little snow on the ground that there was, was frozen into crystallized atoms, that rose but in brilliant particles on the foot of passing man, and failed to melt upon his instep. Before the oaks of Chatsworth had shaken the hoary frost from their pendent boughs Jabesh Tiddler presented himself at the ponderous gate of the place, and announced himself, freshly-laden pack and all, as a suitor to see Sir John Manners by appointment.

“Well, but come into the porter’s hall, while I bid thy message to the butler,” exclaimed the burly retainer of the Earl of Devonshire; “he,

Master Guiditil, will give thee summat to knock that icicle from off thy red nose this cold morning. In there, and sit thee by the fire."

I will not detain my readers with the conversation that passed, nor the orders that were given by Sir John Manners, when the pedler was admitted to his presence. Suffice it to say, that Jabesh Tiddler received some further commands as well as refreshment, which sent him rejoicing on his way back to Bakewell, and induced him to laugh within at his own causeless terrors of the preceding night. "So ho!" he muttered to himself; "gild and tinsel, what is this? Jabesh Tiddler, thou'rt a man—a man of mist and mummary, for thou art to make at the King of the Peak's one among the noble masks!"

I must now carry the reader's attention to the inside of Haddon Hall, where all was bustle and preparation for the mummary and masks of the approaching night. For the last month Dorothy Vernon had been in consultation with her "tire-women;" but, strange to say, she paid more attention to the becoming fit of a new riding-dress than she did to a quaint device prepared for her, in which she was supposed to represent Diana: with more apparel on, of course, than that thorn-proof—we must suppose—nakedness in

which that pictorial goddess is represented as threading the tangled woods. Dorothy Vernon, however, with the usual inclination to caprice, perhaps, of her sex, had more than one habit prepared; so that, if it suited her fancy, she could appear in half-a-dozen others. Many of my readers no doubt have seen Haddon Hall; but to give those a better idea of it who have not done so, let them imagine that they hear a loud whistle from Sir George Vernon's bed-room for his page, who was loitering at the bottom of the stone stairs opening into the court. The page hastened upstairs into his own room, which adjoined Sir George Vernon's, and presented himself for orders.

"Here!" exclaimed the King of the Peak, "take these antlers, swords, and daggers, and follow me." So saying, he led the way through a second chamber, called the dressing-room, and entered the withdrawing-room; where, in one of the bay-windows of it, commanding a cheerful view of the Wye rushing beneath the trees at the foot of the terrace, he found his daughter, pensively watching the waters. She started as he came in, but at once advanced to meet him.

"What!" exclaimed the King of the Peak, "idle at such a moment as this! Why, Dorothy,

I had wagered my best gazehound that thou hadst been with thy wenches, in the midst of trying on bodices of the strangest pattern! Come with me?"

They then proceeded from the old drawing-room, so cheerfully lighted as it is now by day, with its ample bay-windows, and going through a passage, at the end of which there were some remarkably large, solid, oaken steps, said to be cut from the root of a single tree, whose timber sufficed for the floor of the ball-room, and admitted by the door at the top of these steps, father and daughter stood in the long chamber, in which was to be the dance and mummary of the masked ball. The spacious room gave the length of 109 feet by 18, and 15 feet high. The ball-room was also well lighted—indeed, both this and the drawing-room are wonderfully lighted by day, considering the date of the edifice; and on this occasion, when Sir George Vernon and his heiress stood there, the sun had not yet passed sufficiently in his western career to refuse to light with his beams of gold some of the ornaments put upon the walls for the occasion. These consisted of antlers, bows and swords, dirks, daggers, and battle-axes, tastefully arranged with banners, intermixed with ever-

greens and boughs from the mistletoe, holly, and the hawthorn, the mingling of whose bright leaves and ruddy berries among the glittering blades of the weapons threw over the room a very brilliant effect.

“ So ! ” cried the King of the Peak, as he surveyed the preparations with satisfaction ; “ this is all as it should be. Ha, my girl ! is that thy fancy ? See, each carving of the boar’s head has the mistletoe attached. Well, I know not who is to salute thee as my daughter and as thy suitor ; it would *not be manners* . . . Heyday ! what makes thee blush so, child ? Why, thou art ready to swoon in thy confusion ! Hast thou a suitor, then ? But, as I was saying, it would *not be manners* for any man, be he noble knight or gentleman, to touch thy cheek so familiarly, be the old custom what it may. ‘ Gad ! ’ he continued, regarding his daughter’s newly assumed activity about the decorations of the room with no little amusement.—“ ‘ Gad ! the very name of mistletoe and the bare mention of a kiss set her all on fire ! ’ ”

From the ball-room they then proceeded to the ante-room, and thence to the state bed-room, which on this occasion was dedicated to the use of the coming guests, either to arrange their attire

on their arrival, or to change one mask for the other, as their fancy might prompt them to do. Beyond this, again, the most ancient part of the building, there were what is now called the old state-room, and divers passages and smaller apartments, leading by the stairs to "Peverill's Tower," on to the bed-room known as "Dorothy's Chamber," the window of which held very easy verbal or missive communication with the green-sward of the park below. I stood at one of these windows gazing into the park, while I was imagining the look on the face and the size of the hand that had looked through and pressed the bars as my hand pressed them then. There hung the tapestry, and there was the little closet within; from which concealment, it is averred, Sir George Vernon first found out the attachment to the Manners of his daughter. But with these legendary suppositions I will have nought to do; my tale deals with more certain facts.

The ball-room opens out on a terrace, to this day called "the Terrace of Dorothy Vernon," and as the Hall and the terraces stand on the side of the hill, the ingress and egress to the ball-room from this terrace is still *on the ground floor*, though much higher than the great entrance-door that admits into the court-yard below. Dorothy

Vernon's Terrace, even up to the entrance to the ball-room, is now sombred and hued by ancient yews; and at the further end of the terrace in one corner may be still seen the remains of a bower, added to from time to time by boughs of trees, to mark the site of where a bower once was, rather than for any other purpose.

In the days of which I am speaking the bower was kept and clipped, and formed a part of the gardener's care; and in it, aye, on that very spot where I stood to think of the olden time, Sir John Manners first spoke of that love which was eventually to bring the wide domain of her father to the house of Rutland—and there may it long continue.

Early, then, and before the daylight closed, and while the red glare of a cloudless sun was still sinking beneath the purple-tinted hills and giving promise of a nightly frost, the guests for the masked ball began to arrive; some at the main entrance into the court below, and others from the hills by the gateway beneath Peverill's Tower, to which a road led from the direction of the Chatsworth Chase and Hall. Seated on a curious old root from a very old tree, which even at this time protrudes itself from the park through the wall to Dorothy's Terrace, I traced that once

well-beaten carriage-track from the gateway to the hill, and thence towards Chatsworth, and thought of the jolly wood-carts bearing in the log and cord-wood for the fires, and the pony that had brought on its back the goodly stag and buck, and the steeds and retainers that had followed the ladies of the Vernon family, who, perhaps, carried a falcon on their hands for sport on the Longshaw Moors. This road, thwarted and almost trackless now, on this eventful night was bare and hard, and almost plain as a modern highway; and on the night of the fête numbers of peasants were collected round the Peverill Gate, as well as around the main gate below, to watch and make remarks on the quaint attire of their betters. Sir George Vernon and his daughter had stationed themselves in front of those guests who were specially invited to stay at the Hall, about midway of the ball-room, so as to be within similar reach of those—who were by far the greater number—who entered from the court below, and those who came across the hills from Chatsworth, and the vicinity around it. By this arrangement they had a full view of all the grotesque masks, as they promenaded in their approach the one half of the apartment. To receive their guests, Sir George and his daughter

were unmasked, and not in any disguise. Nobles and knights, in peasants' dresses or in fashions taken from foreign countries, soon thronged the room, among gods and goddesses, nymphs and clowns, and queer imitators of monkeys and wild beasts. As they approached the King of the Peak to make their bow, "Ha!" exclaimed the knight, "by my faith, a goodly bear! Welcome, Sir Bruin, to my roof! And see, a stately Knight of the Red Cross! And there's a Juno, her peacock's eyes not half so bright as her own!"

"Your most obedient, Death! Sir Knight of the Woeful Countenance, you might have gladdened us with a more pleasing face!" He said this to a tall man in half-armour, enveloped, too, in a red cloak, from beneath whose steel skull-cap appeared a mask resembling a death's face. It fitted very close to his cheeks, and from his steel head-piece escaped not a semblance of hair, while the cloak fell from his shoulders to his feet, and entirely covered his figure.

"Ho, ho, my jolly friend! but for the fact that I had not sent him an invitation, Godsooth! I should have thought that honest Tiddler the pedler who passed before me. I'll be sworn I saw him in that dress yesterday. Hast any wares to sell?" The figure had a box with him, with a

few articles of lace and embroidery exposed, but seemed not to hear the question, and passed on; while Dorothy, in great haste, entreated her father's attention to other guests, and very shortly afterwards withdrew from his side to put on the disguises she intended to wear during the evening. The music then struck up; the old-fashioned English dances commenced, varied here and there by the minuet; while clowns and boars made noises and exhausted their witticisms in not the most modest phraseology that could be imagined. The license of the period was great, and greatly did some of the guests avail themselves of it, their witticisms not more refined by partaking of the ample and unrestricted cheer for ever ready in the dining-hall. That ample old Hall, with its little retired rooms and ill-lit darkling passages, formed a labyrinth in which those who wished it could for a time be lost. Diana and the pedler, though they never dined together, once or twice were seen to speak and linger near each other; and on one of these occasions, as a faithful historian, I must repeat their words.

“John,” said a voice, very like Dorothy's, “for the love of heaven, tell me if you know who that horrible figure is with the death's head?”

“I know not, dearest love,” replied the presumed pedler. “But why have you taken such a dislike to him?”

“I cannot tell,” replied Dorothy ; “but more than once this evening I have turned round and caught the dreadful sightless orbits fixed upon me, while the feet beneath were stock-still as those of a statue. I have watched him also, and seen him as steadfastly regarding thee. I cannot tell why, but his presence fills me with an unaccountable dread.”

“That assurance would be enough, my dearest, to make me request the removal of the mask, as obnoxious to the Lady of the house : but if I did so I should have to disclose myself ; and that, you know, is out of the question. Think not of him, dearest girl : thy fear is consequent on those nervous feelings, the cause of which we know.” His lips approached still closer to her ear. “Be ready, darling ; the time is nigh ; my men and horses must be close at hand : I go to change my dress to one more fitted to thy companion and thy lover. Put on another disguise—two, if you think necessary—so as completely to make thy father lose sight of thee : but in the last be dressed for flight ; the cloak to conceal thy figure, the hue and embroidery on which I so well know ;

and come to the entrance on the terrace. Once in the open air, leave all the rest to me."

A step approached, and they were surprised in those last few words again by the mask of Death. It passed on, however, and the cold, meaningless, noseless profile and vacant orbits, seemed directed straight away. The figure of the pedler then also disappeared among the throng, and Dorothy went to her room to adopt for a brief space other disguises, and then the riding-dress and cloak alluded to.

The wine and wassail, the joke and dance, seemed to have kept all the guests still in great enjoyment of the night, though many of them had gone, when the seeming pedler issued from the door on to the terrace, and seeing that all was clear gave a low whistle.

"Here, sir," was the reply of a voice in the pitchy shade close at his elbow.

"Right, good Allan ! Is all well, and is the pedler here?"

"In the bower, sir."

"Good: then hie thee back to the men, and be ready when I come."

The Knight walked to the bower, the way to which he knew too well, and there he found Jabesh Tiddler, what with the cold and fright

half dead, in spite of the tankard of strong beer bestowed on him by a Haddon retainer, while watching the arrival of the guests.

“ Haste thee, Jabesh, and give me my riding-suit and arms; and then—mark me well—strip off thy duds, leave them here, and put on this suit I bought of thee, of which I make thee a present, and the mask. That done—do you mind me, for I cannot see thy face—go boldly into the ball-room: no one will gainsay thee, for thou wilt be known only by the dress that has been there all night, and saunter ostentatiously about among the best of them, but speak to none. This done, and well done, for a short time, then leave the room and hie thee back to Chatsworth the shortest way, where Lord Devonshire will see thee taken care of, and protected if necessary. Do this well, and I’ll make thy fortune.”

These arrangements were made with all the speed as well as decency permitted by the darkness, and as the Knight, equipped and armed for riding, stood by the door, his heart throbbed with anxiety, such as a gallant lover only feels when he has to guide and to protect the loved one through a scene of danger. Several guests came to the door, and stood and looked out upon the night. Some went away, and others returned to

the room again; when among those going and returning, and lit up by the blaze of light within, the expected cloak was seen. Sir John laid his hand upon Dorothy's, and drew her to the right of the doorway, as she came out beneath a dark yew, and with his arm round her waist conducted her noiselessly down the terrace to the wall, leaving the bower to the right; and as he approached it, the snort of more than one horse was heard close by in the park below. Here he paused, and bidding Dorothy stand by the wall, he slid down into the park; and when there, asked her to be seated on the wall, her feet to the park, and then to let herself down into his arms, and those assisting him. She did so: a few minutes more, and she was lifted to her saddle, and they proceeded with caution to the road over the hill, and mingled with the rear of other parties going away.

We must now return to the pedler. True to his orders, and to the hope of liberal reward if he enacted his part well, he contrived to press himself into the ball-room among some knights and others that had been bidding their friends and partners in the dance good-bye, and were returning to see the end of the affair, as the night was wearing late, and the room much cleared of its

guests. In one of the turns which Jabesh took, on stopping short and turning round he was terrified at seeing the empty orbits of a death's head intently regarding him. The gaze, however, broke when the owner of the mask saw that he was observed, and Jabesh thought no more of it, though more than once he deemed that, by some unaccountable accident, the death's head was constantly at his heels.

“ I don't like that ugly customer,” murmured the pedler to himself ; “ and, somehow or other, hooks and tinsel ! I'm troubled to my soul when I looks at him. Howsever, time's up, and I'll cut ; so, good-bye, old death's head. And now for snug quarters and warm lining in Chatsworth's noble hall.” As he said this he hastened to the door ; but as some of the latest loiterers were there before him, he was delayed in getting through : at last, however, he found himself, by the light of a very small and waning moon, out in the park, and proceeding through the woods in the direction of Chatsworth.

The King of the Peak had been much amused and much taken up with his retiring guests as they unmasked before him and bade him adieu, and had constantly been looking for some surprise, intended, as he supposed, for him, by

his daughter, when from behind some mask or from beneath some cloak her loved face and figure should appear. The guests, both male and female, grew much fewer, and still she came not ; and at last he found himself alone, attended only by those that were staying with him.

“ Who has seen Dorothy of late ? ” he asked among his friends ; but nobody remembered to have seen her within the last hour or more.

“ Hie thee,” he said to one of his pages ; “ go to thy young lady’s tire-woman and say, if her young mistress has not retired to rest, that I would speak to her.”

The page returned, followed by the head waiting-woman, evidently considerably alarmed, and Sir George Vernon was informed that the woman knew nothing of his daughter since in her last masquerading dress, and that was nearly two hours ago. The high-toned, proud soul of the King of the Peak, was up in arms ; but, furious as the feeling was which beset him, he felt the presence of guests ; and flinging from him with an immense effort any suspicions of an elopement, he bade the waiting-woman go seek her young mistress anywhere till she found her ; and then, turning to his guests, with a wave of his hand he bade them a courtly good night, but

marked enough to show he desired to be left alone. Alone, in concentration of doubt at first, and then of rage, when servant after servant came to assure him his daughter was not in the house, the King of the Peak for a few moments remained inactive, as if stunned by the now too-well-authenticated news. At last, however, he came to himself, and ordering his own horse, and every man he had to mount and scour the country for the fugitives, and to cut down all opposition to her return if they overtook her, he went to change his attire, and to arm himself for vengeance.

In this phase of that strange night we must for the present leave him.

When Master Jabesh Tiddler sped from the door of the ball-room at Haddon Hall he looked up at the horns of the declining moon, and wished that planet had been at the full. However, not all the wishes of the world could alter the waning light in the skies; faint as it was, the pedler had to make the best of it. "Strange!" he said to himself; "though when I went into the ball-room I took no end of pulls at the best belly-lining I ever come across, latches and laces! if my heart an't got down again, as 'twas t'other night when them customers came to me in the

wood. 'Fore heaven, I hopes as nothing *will* come of it!"

Was there no good witch or fairy believed in in those old times, no benignant sign in the skies, to tell that poor unoffending man to turn back and rather lie at the door of the stables of the Hall till daylight, than go down into the dark dell before him? But no, there were none: he did as many a man has done since—he combated the melancholy but certain forebodings of his soul; he shut his ears to what, perhaps, were the benignant whisperings of Heaven, and down into the dark dell beneath the overhanging woods he descended; and as he turned in startled horror to look round at the sound of some hasty foot-fall close behind him, a terrible ring passed through his ears; the fire flew from his eyes, and in the momentary crash of his skull, in one throb of the brain, he knew, as he fell upon his face, that death was upon him, and that all suffering terminated. The murderer knelt by the side of his victim, and groping for the body, placed that heavy hand on the now pulseless heart that he had only scared the day before, when stopping the pedler to question him as to who it was that bought the clothes in which the pedler had appeared at the Hall in the morning,

and the murderer appeared to be satisfied. With this investigation as to death, the same hand then passed over the distorted face, and seemed to dwell upon the features ; but the blow had done its office so well, that thence he could gain no information. The noise of horses and the jingle of arms coming down into the dell then came close upon him : he arose and ran to the right ; but not knowing which way the thickest trees lay, he had taken to the more open vista, and the shoulder of a horse and the knee of the rider striking him on the side, he was dashed forcibly to the earth, and the rider crying a halt, dismounted and stood over him.

“ Who art thou,” cried the voice of Will the deer-keeper, setting his foot upon the body of the fallen man to steady himself, as he had not yet got rid of the strong beer, “ thus taken in the woods, in a ride that leads to nowhere ? Get up, and I’ll send thee back to Haddon.”

And “ Halloo ! who’s here ? ” cried the voice of another retainer. “ God’s my life !—here’s a dead man, for he neither speaks nor moves, and smells of blood ! Keep that other villain safe, for there’s mischief a-foot, or my name’s not Martin.”

These remarks were then very briefly brought to a close ; for the prisoner, starting suddenly to

his feet, aimed a blow at Will the deer-keeper with an old-fashioned battle-axe, brought from the decorations of the ball-room, which, striking Will's horse on the nose, sent him reeling among the other horses, and for a moment all was in the direst confusion. It was too dark for blows, so horses became entangled with each other, and hearing Will's cry to seize the villain, his comrades became locked in each other's arms, unable to distinguish friend from foe: but in the end, the silent, desperate attempts of one figure to be free, brought a concentration of force on what at first was an individual and indiscriminate struggle, and the stranger was secured. By this time the crescent moon had waned before the first faint grey streaks of the winter's morn, and the brightening sky without a cloud gave light enough to make things visible in the soft, fresh, purified atmosphere of the young day, so that by drawing out the prisoner and the body from beneath the trees which marked the boundaries of the chases of Chatsworth and Haddon, the retainers were just enabled to note their ghastly capture, and to see that the attire of the slain was the same as that they had seen at the ball; and that their prisoner was a tall, dark-browed man, in a steel skullcap and half-armour, though he had not then a cloak

attached to him nor any death's-head mark. Leaving some of the men to cut down and arrange a litter for the body, Will then, having seen his prisoner disarmed and tightly secured with a cord, proceeded back with him to Haddon Hall, where he locked him up in the guard-room in the tower, sufficiently guarded by the retainers left on watch. The different parties sent to scour the country for the lost young lady one by one returned; and late that night, and last of all, the haughty Sir George Vernon. Crest-fallen, wearied in mind and body, with the sleepless exertion of the night before and his ride or raid of the day, Sir George retired to his room to hear the reports that were brought to him, glad to find that his guests had taken their departure and left him alone in his otherwise deserted Hall.

Having received the report of the capture of the stranger, found, under very suspicious circumstances, near a murdered man, Sir George ordered the supposed culprit to be brought before him on the following morning, while the body had been laid out in one of the rooms on the ground-floor,—the exact use of which rooms, or for what purposes they were used, unless for stables in times of danger, is to this day a mystery. There is a surface-drain running around

them, which is scarcely to be otherwise accounted for. Dreadfully disfigured as the features were, no one recognised the poor pedler; all attention was riveted to the dress, which had constantly been seen the entire evening of the ball. Sir George, still smarting under what he termed his family affliction, and in no mood to lean to the side of much investigation or mercy, sat on the dais of the great hall, and ordered the prisoner to be brought before him. Heavily handcuffed and firmly bound, a tall, dark man was ushered in, on either side of whom stood a retainer, with the short sword of the bowman drawn, and ready for use, to quell resistance. The statements having been made as to how, when, and where the capture was effected, the prisoner was put on his defence, and Sir George Vernon called upon him to account for his presence near the murdered man. In a dogged and deeply sullen, but collected tone, the prisoner replied,—

“I was passing through the wood; I know of nothing that *you* call a murder, and I challenge the proof of my complicity in it by the production of any witness to the deed.”

“Witness!” replied Sir George; “we have none: but circumstantial evidence is almost conclusive against you. Here!” he exclaimed to the

guard, "conduct the prisoner thus in my presence to the body: we will see what testimony Heaven accords, though the tongue of man be mute."

Thus saying, Sir George rose and followed the guards with their prisoner whither he had desired. The door of the room was thrown open, and the light fell full on the sheet, stained here and there with blood, that screened the corpse from the air; the tramp of the many retainers who followed their "king" had ceased in its measured tread, and all was wrapped in profound silence; the guards advanced their prisoner to the foot of the bier, and Sir George, from the head of it, confronted the accused.

"Ere I withdraw the covering of the murdered dead," said Sir George Vernon, in a solemn, concentrated tone, "prisoner before me, what dost thou say,—art thou guilty or not guilty in taking the life of this fellow-creature, against the laws of our Queen and country? Say, aye or no?"

The prisoner had drawn himself up to his full height while his inquisitor thus addressed him, and with his keen, dark, flashing eyes fixed eagerly on the sheet, which he knew was about to be removed, rather as if in expectation of a sight he longed to see than one that should shock him, in a firm, unshaken, deep voice, replied,—

“He who defends himself against the man who assails his more than life is no murderer. Murderer I am none;—raise up the sheet and test my truth, as God shall be my witness.”

At a sign from Sir George Vernon a retainer drew away the cloth; the eyes of the prisoner flashed fire as he beheld the dress; the cloth had stuck to the features by the drying blood, and hung a moment to the head: then, with a sudden jerk, the face was exposed; some drops of blood followed, and, with a start, the prisoner fell on the stone floor as if he had had a crossbow bolt driven through the brain. He lay insensible till raised by the retainers and some water dashed in his face, when, utterly changed in look and manner, and even apparently shrunk in figure, in the weakest accents of tremulous despair he said,—

“I am, in truth, the murderer!”

“Away with him!” exclaimed the stern and quick administrator of justice; “away with him to some field near a public highway, where there is a befitting tree; or if no tree is there fit to bear such fruit, erect a gibbet, and hang the murderer, thus red-handed, on the spot! Away, I say, and see the execution done!”

The sentence was immediately carried into execution.

No sooner had the sentence been passed upon the murderer than the old crones of the village came, charmed with the order to wash and lay out the dead—a duty so much in accordance with their desires as to be a source of pleasurable satisfaction to them. While this undressing and “streeking” out the limbs was going on, the old woman engaged in washing the face let fall the basin in her hand, and shrieked,—

“May Heaven be gracious, if it an’t poor Master Tiddler the pedler! Well! well! who’d have thought of this being his end?”

The poor pedler, thus recognised by them, as he had been before by his murderer, who expected to have seen when the sheet was removed a far different face, was shortly after buried in the churchyard at Bakewell; while the field in which his murderer was hung, near the turnpike that now stands on the road to Bakewell, to this hour, and for that reason, bears the name of “Gallows Acre.”

There is a slight obscurity whether this deed of summary justice was enacted in the close of Mary’s reign or in the beginning of that of Elizabeth; but in either of these reigns it could scarcely be expected that a man should be hanged without a legal and sufficient trial, and hence, to

answer for the deed, the King of the Peak was cited to appear in the Court at Westminster. On the day on which he received that summons, scouts brought him word that they had discovered the whereabouts of the fugitives; and that they were resident with a female relation of Sir John Manners, not very far distant; to whose house the King of the Peak instantly repaired, with an armed party, to assist him in the recovery of his child.

What passed indoors—for Sir George Vernon was at once admitted—no one knows; but it ended by Sir George Vernon riding back to Haddon at the head of his followers, with two happy companions on either side his bridle-rein—his daughter and her betrothed husband; and intelligence having fled before, they were welcomed at the bridge across the Wye by the cheers of his assembled friends and retainers.

As to the summons to the Court of Westminster, Sir George, of course, attended; and the “crier of the Court” called thrice upon the “King of the Peak” “to appear;” but without any response. He then called upon “Sir George Vernon, Knight,” to “answer to his name;” when the clear, manly voice of the respondent exclaimed, “I am here.” It would seem, then, that Sir

George was much too good and powerful a man to be punished, or even blamed too much. So the lawyers and the judges laid their heads together, and an error in the pleadings was set up and admitted: by which informality it was supposed that the summons and the charge alike, for the time being, fell to the ground. They were never amended or renewed. And so ended the last execution by the old Saxon law of *Infangthef* and *Outfangthef*; and as a Lord Berkeley was the last custodier of the public peace who hung a man at Bristol for "shooting a hare with a crossbow," so Sir George Vernon, at a more recent date, was the last justice who, on his own responsibility, hung a man for murder.

The King of the Peak lived many years after the transactions herein related; and at his death Sir John Manners, through his marriage with Dorothy Vernon, brought to the house of Rutland an immense accession of domain.

My strange guest had barely done imparting to me the groundwork of this tale when he suddenly started from his chair, and, looking to the window, crushed on his hat; and butting at the bars, proceeded to compress himself most wondrously through their narrow space. On alight-

ing in the garden he waved with one hand respectfully to me, and pointed to the east with the other. At that moment the door of my apartment opened, and the rather drowsy voice of the excellent waiting-maid of the Peacock at Rowsley said, "Perhaps, sir, as it's very late, you'll be good enough to extinguish the light when you retire, and I need not sit up any longer."

She retired: bottle and jug were alike empty; the candles were in their sockets. I must have been very dry; I must have drank and dreamed: still, how came a vacant chair, and the table with a wine-glass near it, opposite to me? and what made the crack in the diamond window-pane, to the left of the window as you look into the pretty garden? It was unlikely that I should have placed a chair and glass, and broken a window in my sleep. It must have been a ghost!

CHAPTER XXII.

LEGEND OF WOLVERTON HOUSE, DORSETSHIRE—SIR THOMAS
TRENCHARD—THE ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA—THE COURT
IN 1509.

AMONG the strange anecdotes and legends that I have found to be in existence is one of Wolverton House, in the county of Dorset, about one mile from Dorchester. This house was built by Sir Thomas Trenchard, about 1508. Philip, archduke of Austria and king of Castile, paid Sir Thomas a visit during his stay in England in 1509, soon after the mansion was finished.

Sir Thomas Trenchard, who was famed for his gallantries as well as his princely hospitality and travels, returned from the Court of Spain, where he had gained great favour, and with him came a little foot-page, of slight form and dark eyes, that seemed to flash fire every now and then, and then to shrink back again into the Egyptian night of the large orbits that his im-

mensely long black eyelashes could with difficulty conceal, as if those eyes were conscious that they must be controlled, however impossible it was to stint them of every natural and momentary expression. This page, who bore the name of "Bona," was very taciturn, and shunned the familiarities of the whole household, seemingly only attentive and only pleased when in the presence of Sir John Trenchard, or when he spoke to him, which was ever in a kindly tone of voice. Many were the surmises that had been made as to who this page was, and even as to the sex of the page ; but Sir John was a man greatly feared as well as respected by his household, and nothing ever reached his ears that could displease him in any way.

There were many conflicting reports about this page, and one, a rumour of some scandal—that he had fixed his affections of late on a young gallant in the neighbourhood; and that, as the Scotch would say in the north, they—the gallant and Bona—were "ower sib thegither." However, be this report true or false, it does not matter, save that it shows some reason for my saying that I do not think that the catastrophe which followed was ever correctly accounted for.

Before this rumoured "company-keeping" of

the page with a stranger had been talked of, it had been observed that whenever a high, a haughty, and a handsome dame from the vicinity of Salworth, was an honoured guest at Wolverton House, to whom it was known that Sir Thomas Trenchard paid more attention than the usual deference to the female sex demanded, the page was on these occasions excited even to an incoherent and unintelligible degree. His dark eyes flashed by fits and starts, as if illuminated by phosphoric exhalations, as the waves of the sea may be seen to be when under certain atmospheric powers. To such an extent on these occasions was Bona unhinged, that he even forgot to fill his patron's cup when empty, and once in particular he handed to the Knight vinegar in his tankard instead of an invigorating draught of sufficient old ale. The Knight remarked this extraordinary state of affairs, and perhaps thought he could account for it, though he appeared for the time not to see it : but that he did see it, was proved by the page being forbidden to wait at his chair whenever the haughty and handsome dame dined with him.

On one of these days, when, with his usual profuse hospitality, Sir John had invited a large party of his friends to his Manor, and among them

the handsome dame before alluded to, just as they were preparing to go into dinner the host asked his guests to excuse in him a temporary absence of a few minutes. It had been remarked by some Paul Pry in the household, that whenever Sir John went in to dinner without his page being in attendance, the page absented himself from the usual places of resort of the rest of the household, and on one occasion this Paul Pry observed Bona ascend a staircase in the direction of a gloomy old room, that stood in its loneliness considerably apart from all others at the occupied portion of the house.

Whether or not the spy told this to Sir Thomas, or whether Sir Thomas's suspicions as to anything were aroused by some other means, no one can now tell. As it was at the moment of being about to be accounted for by going in to dinner, he excused his absence for a few moments to his guests, and was seen to go up the stairs leading to this gloomy bed-room with a northern aspect, in a stealthy but resolute manner. The next thing that was heard was the report of a pistol. A general rush of guests and serving-men being then made to the north room, the place indicated by the report of the fire-arm as the scene of some disaster, the hospitable, princely

Knight, was found lying dead, his bosom pierced by a pistol-ball. Whether he perpetrated the act himself, or who did it, or who had been in the room with him, in the confusion which ensued, was never known. No one was in the room when the alarmed guests and servants reached it, but a pistol, never recognised as belonging to the Knight, seemed to have been flung under the bed. From that hour henceforth, or within the memories of the living then and there, after that day the page was never more seen, nor the young gallant with whom it was said the page kept company.

After this sad occurrence the old north room got a bad name; and it was even alleged that the ghost of the Knight, the spirit of the dead man, haunted the passages, pointing with a shadowy finger in one particular direction, which was towards a door by which an assassin, if there were one, might have escaped. After nightfall not an inmate of the mansion, not a serving-man, would pass through the corridors in the vicinity of that dreaded chamber. Once only was an attempt made to use the room, and it arose thus. A lady from Poole wrote to one of the Trenchards, saying she should like to spend a few days at Wolverton House, and away from the water's

edge, for the sake of her health. The owner of the mansion at once wrote to tell her, in reply, how happy he should have been to have seen her, but that every room in his house was full, *save the northern chamber*, which continued in a state of disuse on account of its ill name. He added, if she liked to occupy that room it was very much at her service. The lady thanked him for his kindness, and said she neither believed in nor feared unearthly apparitions; so she came, and went to bed in the haunted chamber. She remained in it but one night. Ere she left on the following morning, in an interview with her host, she said that the angry ghost of Sir Thomas Trenchard appeared at her bedside, and with frowns and furious grimaces tore down the bed-curtains, knocked the pillow from under her head, and pulled the bedclothes off her, and then she fainted away. So much did this fair lady suffer from this violent visitation of the ghost at Wolverton, that on reaching Poole it was many weeks before she could leave her room. The northern wing of the old house, in which this haunted room was, was then pulled down, and new apartments built upon its site: in vain, though, as regarded one other and last appearance of the ghost, in a new phase of unearthly visitation. There was,

as usual with that hospitable family, a large party staying in the house, and among the party several officers from a regiment quartered near. At the head of the table on that day sat one of the ladies of the Trenchard family, famed for the exquisite loveliness of her face and figure; and when the guests were assembled after dinner in the withdrawing-room, the officers told Mrs. Trenchard that by the agency, they supposed, of some reflected light, the stern-looking outline of a man, draped from head to foot in white, had seemed to stand all dinner-time by the side of her chair. Mrs. Trenchard, in all her health, her youth and beauty, laughed, or seemed to laugh, at what the officers told her, but the next morning she was found dead in her bed! The unlucky building soon after passed into the possession of the Henning family, but within the last few years it has been purchased by Roper Weston, Esq., who, I hope, will enjoy his possessions without ghostly interruptions, and find beneath the old roof the shelter and the blessings of a happy home.

Speaking of "the Upper Ten Thousand," in England as well as elsewhere, perhaps in no country under the sun is the noble and aristo-

cratic position of man more set apart, or above the middle-class and barbarous vulgarity of the multitudes by which he is overwhelmed, than in uproarious and disunited America. For years the real gentleman, the aristocrat and natural nobleman, has held himself aloof from any political attempt to assert his position, or have a voice in the parliamentary conclaves of his country. His voice, and his right to be heard, are alike swamped by a heterogeneous mass of adventurers from all parts of the world; the scum of countries fled to evade the punishment of crime, or because, in their native homes, they had squandered, or drank, or gambled away their substance—if they had any—and therefore were driven to seek a living elsewhere.

Nothing, at the time of my visit, could be more dignified or graceful than the position assumed by the natural nobility of America—by the rich men, or by those who really had by far the greatest stake in what may be called the commonwealth; and therefore, assuredly, they had the most legitimate right to see the wealth and stability of their country steadily, peacefully, and honourably maintained.

Not one of these tangible and able gentlemen, at the period I allude to, deigned to ask a vote,

or thought it right to make the vain effort, swamped as they were by a sort of universal suffrage and a dishonest ballot-box, to obtain a representative position. They stood aloof—firmly, fearlessly, and well—and let the empty and peniless clamour they could not successfully grapple with carry the day, and bring the great Union to destruction ; to a destruction which, though it may be spliced and knotted, as a sailor would say, and apparently patched up for a time, can never be thoroughly repaired : for the Republican institutions, on which the basis of the interminable continental possession stands, is so mixed up by incongruous materials of conflicting kinds, that when all seems peace the seeds of dissension are growing here and there, that need but a little fanning to bring them to maturity.

When I quitted America, after my hunting-tour in the Far West, I left behind me many a dear friend, made in the short space of the few months I sojourned among them ; and they were all of the superior class to which I have particularly alluded. I fear to write to them now, or to ask after them. My letters may be returned, the address no longer known ; or some relative may reply, “ Your friend is dead ”—died in the few years that have elapsed since I saw him ; or been killed in the de-

vastating war, wherein the Southernns fought for the boasted freedom in the United States, and the Yankees to make them slaves—worse slaves than even the black population ever were. For in the South they were treated kindly; while in the North the blatant and pretended friends to the negro when it suited their purpose, on all ordinary occasions scouted and reviled them, as if they were the meanest beasts under heaven, and not fit to sit at board, in theatre or church, with white men, whose ancestors had been transported, and, as a severe critic said, had handcuffs and irons as their most ancient family jewels.

To enliven a chapter with some anecdotes as to Americans, I must once again allude to my passage across from Southampton to Havre, when I went to hunt in the French forests.

It was midnight when I descended from the deck of the packet to the infernal regions below. I do not think any imaginary place can be more disgusting or horrible than 'tween decks with a lot of people. As I lay stretched on a couch—as I like free access to my berth, wherever it may be—speculating on the foreheads of men, the backs of the heads of men, sleeping and waking men, &c., and wondering what manner

of souls were in the bodies of all, I was aroused from my speculations by a tall, self-possessed, go-a-head-looking man, who, with sea-going legs certainly, perambulated the floor of the saloon, keenly eyeing one berth after another. When he arrived quite aft, I was sitting upright with my legs on the floor, speculating on his calling, or on who or what he could be, for I liked his looks; when, on seeing that he still eyed the berths—they were nearly all full—I opened conversation with him, in a half-bantering tone, by saying, “What, *can’t* you make up your mind where to turn in?”

Facing directly about, he regarded me intently for a moment; and then, as if catching my humour, he replied,—

“I don’t see that I’ve much to make up my mind upon; the berths seem to be all taken! Your legs are down, I see. Guess, if you’ll permit me, I’ll sit awhile by you.”

Acquiescing in this, we were soon in familiar conversation as if we had known each other twenty years. He was a captain of an American trader, so I was right about his sea-legs; when having found that out, I discussed with him the merits of his country, what beasts were best to hunt, what birds to shoot, and what were the choicest eating

things at table. I did not then contemplate the journey afterwards made by me to the Prairies in the Far West. BULL frogs, ye gods! and canvas-backed ducks, were the greatest delicacies!

“Bull frogs!” I exclaimed. “I never heard of anything so *beastly*.”

“Beastly!” he replied. “Well, I reckon I hated the idea of eating ’em at first, but I soon came into it: one go at ’em, and I thought them good. Just you try some day, and you’ll not call our best dish ‘beastly’ any more.”

“Well,” I said, “I’m sure I never could stomach your reptiles. Now tell me, what is your real opinion of slavery?”

He regarded me intently, and then replied, setting his keenly inquisitive eyes full on mine,—

“My opinion? I’m an Abolitionist.”

“The deuce you are!” I rejoined. “I should not have thought that. The abolition of slavery, and the Whiggish infraction of apprenticeship by compact, have ruined me. As the measure was effected, it was one of the greatest errors the Whigs committed; and, by Jove! that’s saying a good deal.”

Looking hard at me for a moment, he continued,—“That is, I’m an Abolitionist *when the blacks are fit to claim their liberty*.”

“ Oh ho !” I rejoined. “ Then you agree with me, the time is not yet arrived ?”

“ No,” he said, with a sly wink, “ and won’t be yet for years to come. Why, Providence itself shows they are only fit to labour for the whites.”

“ How is the Divine will so marked ?”

“ How ? Why, *look* at ’em ; look at their *woolly* heads : it ain’t Christian hair. Nor their colour neither. They don’t even smell like a Christian. It’s evident, all the world over, they ain’t, and they ain’t meant to be, as good as we are.”

“ Enough, Captain,” I cried ; “ it had been the better for all of us, British Guiana proprietors, if you had been King of our West India colonies.”

“ Well,” he said, “ but ain’t it just so ? ain’t I about in the right fix as to those bow-shinned beggars ?”

“ I can’t deny some of your personal facts,” I rejoined ; “ and, even spiritually, I fear the Whig Government has been very far from increasing or serving the true interests of religion in the West Indies : but though I would have continued the apprenticeship to the last hour, I don’t go quite so far as you do.”

“I know it,” he said. “I, as an American, would neither sit down with them, nor eat nor drink with them, nor go to the same theatre or chapel.”

After some more conversation we parted, and I suppose he found some place, as he said, to “turn in,” as I did not see him again till the next morning. I had been on deck to breathe the sweet sea air, and to look at the pretty outline of the Havre cliffs, and had gone down hungry to breakfast; but when I came on deck again there stood my friend, the American Captain, bolt upright by the companion-ladder, and sternly and intensely regarding the receding figure of a well-dressed man.

“Holloa, Captain!” I exclaimed, on observing his angry looks; “what’s up in the wind, now? you don’t seem happy.”

“Happy! — pleased!” he sternly replied. “How should I? Look what’s coming towards us!”

“Well,” I replied, “I see a well-dressed coloured gentleman, I take him to be, because he’s aft the funnel. What harm is he doing?”

“Harm!” rejoined the Captain. “Harm! Why, just look at him! There he goes, walking absolutely in front of those ladies who are seated!

There's black impudence!—an unnatural beggar! Why, I wouldn't do so. What business has a Nigger abaft the funnel? I've half a mind to drop into him!"

"Well, now, Captain, just tell me, if you go down to breakfast, and he comes too, what will you do? You can't 'drop into him;' that's not permitted: so what course would you take?"

"Course!" he cried; "why, if I was half famished I'd steer upon deck again. I'd quit the table as long as that black beggar sat there."

Observing that the black gentleman was very intelligent, and with very good manners, I entered into conversation with him, and after speaking to him met our Captain again.

"Well," said my American friend with a sneer, "hope you like your Nigger!"

"Yes," I replied; "he is a very intelligent, well-educated man. He speaks both French and English fluently. And I'll tell you what, my boy, you'll have to be civil to him—at least your country will. He has been to England an accredited ambassador, is now going to France, and then to Washington: so Captain, my friend, hold on."

This communication certainly altered the tone of my sea-going friend, and I thought that he

seemed to wish to make the acquaintance of the coloured gentleman, though whether he did so or not I never knew.

When on board the Cunard packet, and going to America, there were a great many Americans aboard, and as they became acquainted with the facts as to who I was, and where I was bound to, they accosted me with their usual free-and-easy manner, and in some instances put on the steam immensely as to their country and their deeds. One thin, bony young man, said to me,—“ Guess you think yourself not a bad rifle-shot ?”

“ Guess I do think myself a pretty good one,” I replied.

“ You do—do you?” he rejoined. “ Wall, don’t you go among our boys in Kentucky, unless you have done with a rifle what every one on ’em can do; and that is, they take an old rifle-barrel of the pea-bore, and jest set it up longitudinally at a hundred yards. They then take their big rifle, and fill the pea-barrel up chock full with lead, without missing a single shot.”

“ Guess,” I replied, “ I don’t undertake to do that; but I don’t fear to meet the best shot in Kentucky, if ever we should come together.”

Of all the blazing lies ever told in America, or the greatest and most amusing amount of hyper-

bole that ever was indulged in, I take it the following is the most remarkable:—

“Yas, sir; you require of me—yas, sir—to tell you one of my most extra-or-di-nary adventures. I’ve had a good many. Yas, sir; it was in summer, sir. Yas, sir, VERY HOT—hotter than you ever see it in your old country. The day I speak of was so in-ju-ri-ously briling that the breath of the little birds as they sat to sing set every bush on fire, as if the foliage had been steeped in risin! Wall, sir, I sat down on the ground to take off my shoes, for the soles on ’em were so red-hot that they scorched my stockings. Just as I had got ’em off, and was a-blowing ’em cold, I see coming at me, with the speed of forty thousand telegrams, a bull, sir!—yas, a great monstrous bull, sir!—a bull he was of such preponderative size that he hid the horizon behind him! The bull roared like thunder! I ran like lightning! when, in jumping over a hedge in my endeavour to escape, my breeches split!—yas, sir, burst with such a crushing crack, it seemed as if heaven and earth were rent asunder! A fact, sir! yas, a fact!”

“Well, sir, you interest me; but did you escape, or what became of the bull?”

“Escape, sir! Bull, sir! Oh, bull! he

dropped down dead! The noise of my rent breeches so concussioned the air that the animal nature couldn't stand it, and bull rolled over! Yas, sir; and what is more, sir, the sun was so hot, and the day so hot, with the earth so furnationously blazing, that in three minutes from the time the bull fell I sat down on his head, and ate from his hinder parts as good a beef-steak as mortal man ever tasted!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

GOVERNOR WALL (GOVERNOR AND COMMANDANT), LORD
CAMELFORD, AND GOVERNOR EYRE CONTRASTED.

AFTER having been a living witness to the immense injustice done to Governor Eyre, I must say, when we read of the execution of Governor Wall in 1802, for having flogged a black soldier, of which flogging that soldier happened to die, I can but wonder that any sufficient gentleman or soldier should be found to preside as Governor over any of our colonies or dependencies. If, in cases of incipient mutiny or rebellion, a Governor do not take time by the forelock, and by a bold, severe, and decisive punishment, nip the schism in the bud, why then rebellion becomes rampant, women are ill-treated, and peaceful citizens are murdered. If he do not thus act with firmness and prompt decision, he is assailed by the Government at home for not doing his duty, and he is

shelved from further employment. If we consider the circumstances of Governor Wall, everybody must admit that there was great insubordination and dereliction of duty, quite sufficient to flog a soldier for, to the very severest extent of that punishment. Eight hundred lashes were only to be administered, *if the man could bear it*—a surgeon standing by, as was usual at all such military punishments; and had the surgeon at any moment, on feeling the man's pulse, informed the military commandant that he could bear no more, he would have been loosed from the gun immediately. A man may die from a few strokes of the cat-o'-nine-tails if he is of a bad habit of body. There was a man in one of our cavalry regiments—I forget, at this moment, which; but it was commanded by a Colonel Whyte—who died after anything but a very severe flogging. Whatever misfortune happens, there are always misfortune-mongers in this country, ready to seize on the accidental fact, and in speeches to the multitude to distort it and colour it up as a crime committed by one of “the Upper Ten Thousand.” Where Governor Wall made a very great mistake was, in his condemnation of himself; or, in other words, absenting himself from trial for no less a period than eighteen years, because, with the living wit-

nesses, and public feeling originated by humanity-mongers against him, he feared to meet the charge of murder; such fear at once admitting, or being supposed to admit, that he himself doubted whether he had or had not exceeded, even in a great exigency, the administration of the law. On returning to take his trial after such a lapse of time, that most ridiculous thing called a jury was certain to pronounce him guilty, if it were only to show the boasted and enduring majesty of the law, and to prove that, however slow the Avenger of blood may be in reaching the criminal, the Avenger is sure to be up with him at last.

The summing up of Judge —, as far as I can understand it, was impartial enough, but confused and weak as to many points. In short, it consisted, as many a charge from a judge has to my certain knowledge consisted since, of the unquestionable propriety and advice in the way of directions to a jury: that is, “if they believed the prisoner innocent, they would acquit him; but if guilty, then they would say so, and fearlessly do their duty.” Governor Wall stood six feet four without his shoes, and in reading the circumstances attending his execution, it will there be seen that the only thing that seemed to interest him, or prey on his mind, up to the last moment,

was, "that the hangman should or should not pull his legs." This request of the legs not being pulled the executioner himself made unavailable, for the clumsy operator of the law contrived to bring the knot of the rope to the back of the head, so that the wretched sufferer was eleven minutes in dying; and did not then die, until the executioner and his assistant had pulled at his legs for some considerable time.

A Governor must, from his position, be considered as one of "the Upper Ten Thousand;" and therefore as fair game for every man of lower grade, every demagogue like Mr. Bright, no matter how, to run at and to endeavour to destroy. In the course of conversation in the Committee-room on the Game Laws, after we had dissolved for the day, and Mr. Bright and myself were left alone; in answer to some remark of mine he said, that "in his composition he did not know what animal courage was; that he had no personal courage of that kind; and didn't wish to have." My reply to this was, that then he must be singularly deficient in two things, of which most men were proud. If, according to his own assertion, he had no animal courage, I knew very well that he had none that was moral; and wished him joy of his situation. This was on the same

day that he told me, "that when I became a legislator there was a very good gamekeeper spoilt."

But to return to the miserable end of Governor Wall. It is curious to view the three facts together—that of the severe measures taken by Lord Camelford to repress an attempt at mutiny, when the insubordinate Lieutenant Charles Peterson was shot on the spot; for which Lord Camelford, at his own request, was tried by court-martial on board the "Invincible," at Port Royal Bay, Martinique, and acquitted: and then the trial of Governor Wall, who was hung for murder. Lastly, this lamentable, unwise, and despicable—but very signally abortive—attempt to arraign Governor Eyre for murder; when to my certain knowledge, from direct communication with friends in the island of Jamaica, there was not at that moment living a white lady or gentleman, unconnected with the self-seeking humanity-mongers, who did not in their souls believe that they owed their escape from death—and, as regards the female sex, from worse than death—to the promptness, capability, and courage of the high-souled man—the unjustly superseded, and therefore injured Governor—whom a miserable clique then tried to destroy. Their vain and spurious animosity, however, has recoiled upon themselves,

and achieved a victory in which every right-thinking person must rejoice.

It is fortunate for "the Upper Ten Thousand" that they have a high-toned sense of their political state and station duties, which sustains them proof against the continual attacks of demagogues; which keeps them in their sense of right, mailed against the vulgar shafts that are devised simply to derogate, and solely for the low and vile purpose of detraction. That which I deeply regret—regretting it as a man who, by the grace of God, has looked long, and with unimpaired faculties, too, upon the transactions of "the Upper Ten Thousand," is, the constant creation of new Peers; and, by such additions, the introduction of a more plebeian and less aristocratic purity of thought, than used to preside in the minds of those who composed the highest tribunal in the State. I do not wish to be invidious: but there is no end of Smiths, Jacks, Browns, and Robinsons exalted to the House of Lords; men accredited there through their possessions, and from their having performed certain party drudgeries in the House of Commons.

These, and such as these, partake not of the high bearing of the ancient Barons. Nor do they rightly constitute that class who, of right, should

hold the upper seats of the highest of "the Upper Ten Thousand."

If things go on as they have been going on, why to be a Commoner will be an enviable distinction to the fact of being a created Peer; and the farce of the fabulous "Joseph" will be enacted over again, in an highminded Esquire flying from the embrace of the House of Lords, and leaving his robes in the hands of the disappointed Lord Chancellor.

We have recently seen London on the eve of a riot, in ruffianism and brutality equivalent to the No-Popery scenes enacted by the "roughs" collected by Lord George Gordon. And we have found, as then, an "*amiable*" Secretary of State, as little up in the will or power to repress it, as the Government was on that day to put down the mob set on foot by a moody madman on the score of religion. We wear no swords now; so if the ruffianly mob ever force their way into the Houses of Parliament, the bold, the spirited, and the defiant Members on the floor of the House in front of the Speaker's chair, will have to brain the bright author of all the mischief with the mace from the table, should the door of the exclusive Assembly be assailed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BERKELEY CASTLE IN THE YEAR 1327—EDWARD II.—
THOMAS LORD BERKELEY—GOURLAY—MALTRAVERS—
LORD MORTIMER—THE QUEEN OF EDWARD II.—ED-
WARD III.—THE CASTLE OF BRISTOL—THE WARLIKE
BARONS—THE SPENCERS—THE PRIESTLY CHANCELLOR
BALDOC, THE EARL OF ARUNDEL, ETC.—MURDER AND
BURIAL OF THE KING.

IN one of the rooms of the Castle of Berkeley, in the vicinity of the donjon, and looking out upon the Keep Garden, but nevertheless, for the period, handsomely furnished, and warm and comfortable, sat a middle-aged handsome man, but still one who seemed bowed down by a weight of misfortune, which gave to his appearance even twice the real time of his life. Though the expression of the figure was poor and woe-begone, there was nevertheless a something about the man that spoke of high place and command in society—rather, perhaps, the offspring of education and habit than from any innate grace or quality possessed by the being in question.

Sitting in a large-backed easy chair, his chin resting on his bosom, his eyes fixed on the fire, his lips constantly humming a love-ditty, this woe-begone figure was aroused to a little more life by the entrance of an usher, who, bowing low, stated that his Lord of Berkeley craved permission to pay his respects to his Majesty, and that he was waiting in the outer room. "Admit my Lord of Berkeley," was the reply; and his Lordship then entering, was desired to sit down.

"My good friend," said Edward the Second—for it was no other than that unfortunate monarch—"I am glad to see you. If I must be a prisoner, I could not desire to be in more gentle hands than yours. I am low to-night," continued the King, "and have an innate dread of some further misfortune immediately pending over my unhappy head. Tell me," he said, taking Lord Berkeley's hand, "you will not leave me; at least, let me count on one loyal baron, on one sincere friend: for God knows I need protection and support when all are turned against me—all, even to my wife, whom I love still to distraction!"

"My liege," replied Lord Berkeley, "as far as my protection goes, it is hand-in-hand with my duty to the Crown and Parliament, and while

under my poor roof none will dare to harm your Majesty nor gainsay my will."

"I believe in your kindness, my lord," replied the King. "Strange, too, that I should do so when every one I have ever favoured has proved my foe; and the Queen herself, the most sinful and deadly conspirator of them all! Everything has been against me: my kingdom and its harvests racked with cold rains and unseasonable weather till all the corn had perished; and then a cattle disease, which carried off herds and flocks almost to annihilation. All that Parliament did in 1315 was of no avail, and all the evils that Parliament, or the elements, or disease did, were laid to my charge."

"True, sire," replied Lord Berkeley; "your Majesty's position has been a trying one, but we must hope that the good offices of your sons, the Princes Edward and John, and your two daughters, may yet work beneficially in your royal favour."

"No," replied the King: "for me there is no help. What can I expect of children set against me by their mother; or what at the hands of a nobility who live as they select to live—by the sword and the grievous infliction of wrong? Refer to the losses complained of by petition,

ruin done to my Lord Spencer ; and then see his damages on sixty-three manors laid at forty-six thousand pounds, his only fault his loyalty ; can any one say that we are not all robbers, or that a chaos of crime has not overspread society and reduced all men to each other's level ?”

“ Hush !” said the King, looking wildly round : “ did you not hear that wailing cry ? I, who listen all night to the winds, have heard it before, but never so loud nor so often as it has come to me to-night. Sometimes I think it the neighing of a horse, but at others the loud shriek of despair. Is it—can it be?—is it the Witch of Berkeley on her frightful ride ?”

“ No, my good, my gracious liege,” replied Lord Berkeley ; “ this is a stormy night, and you but hear the high wind roaming and rushing around the gables and battlements, and tall bulk of some of the chimneys. The villeins beneath the walls all believe it to be the witch ; but as it never is heard except the winds are high, I know the real origin of the sounds that frighten others.”

“ There !” exclaimed the King, as again a wild, long, moaning shriek seemed floating over the leads ; “ *you* hear it, and you feel it now ! Your colour changes, and I was right ! Hear me then,

my lord; I have been told that sounds like these presage misfortune, and even death. There is about me a dread of I know not what, a sense of some imminent and terrible calamity about to burst on my devoted head! Say—say that you will defend my life, and treat me well while under your care?”

“I pray you, my liege, be calm,” replied Lord Berkeley; “you are under my roof and my care, and, thus situated, while I am present none can harm you. Be not downcast, turn your mind to lighter things; time bids me leave your Majesty just now, as it is the hour of supper in the great hall. May I send to your Majesty’s presence the jester, or my maidens with the lute? they will while away the time, and dispel all gloomy sensations.”

“Oh, my good lord,” cried the King, his well-featured face streaming with tears, “look at me, and at the indignities I have so recently suffered, and the insults forced on me by my late keepers in the Castle of Bristol. They did not like my coming here to you; they brought me like a thief in the night, made me ride bare-headed, and but scantily clothed. In coming through the granges of Bristol Castle they twisted up some musty hay into the representation of a crown, because I said

I was cold, and made me wear it; and when we came to that solitary heath, not far from Thornbury, they set me down on a mole-hill and shaved off my hair and beard, washing me with ditch-water, and then joined my guards the soldiers in mocking me and saying, ‘Fare forth, Sir King; there are none will know thee now!’ Oh, my good lord, talk not of whiling away my misery with fool or woman! I feel that I stand on the verge of the grave, with misery still in store. Promise me one thing only, and that is your protection. It is your king who craves it, and mercy bids his prayer be granted.”

All that was in the power for man to do, in the shape of words of comfort, by all that I could ever discover, through the books and papers at my disposal, Lord Berkeley did; and on this eventful night, having in some measure calmed the poor prisoner’s fears, the Lord of the Castle sought his supper on the dais in the great hall.*

It was on a dark and stormy time that night of September, in the year of our Lord 1327, that the warder at the outer gate over the drawbridge of the entrance to Berkeley Castle was aroused by the blast of a horn. No sooner had that

* Smith’s “Lives of the Berkeleys;” Foxbrooke’s “History of Berkeley;” Sir Thomas de la More, &c.

summons echoed and re-echoed among the high battlements of the Castle, than it was again replied to from within the court-yards by the deep baying of the bloodhounds and gazehounds then kept for the purposes of chase; and acting, too, as no despicable alarmists and guards in the event of sentinels slumbering at their post.

Lord Berkeley was at the time comfortably seated by the roaring chimney of his great hall, but still ruminating over his late melancholy conversation with his king, and, truth to say, in no mood to be disturbed either by unmasked friends or undesired foes. His favourite gazehound, "Druid," so tall as to be able to lay his long muzzle on the supper-table, was the first to be aware of some distant intrusion, and by a low, deep growl, to call his lord's attention to the fact. Some time having elapsed in ascertaining what manner of men they were who so suddenly, and at such an untimely hour, solicited attention—in the lowering of the drawbridge at the first entrance, and in raising the portcullis in the second, and then, under their lord's behest, in the admission of the guests—all this gave his lordship time, from a missive of a few short lines, to be aware that the intruders bore an order from the Court and Parliament. Urgent business, to be more fully ex-

plained by letters to be delivered with their own hands.

That Lord Berkeley neither liked the sudden intrusion (no host ever likes to be taken unawares), nor the orders that they might possibly bear, was very visible by the dark and angry expression of his brow; but, long before there was a chance of that cloud passing away, the solemn footsteps of the seneschal, or janitor of the Castle, were heard, as the great iron-studded door from the court swung on its hinges; and while Lord Berkeley tried to smooth the featured storm but too obviously portrayed in the lineaments of his countenance, the seneschal advanced, and appearing to be astonished at his own impossibility to announce the names of the guests, from their having been refused to him, stood like an automaton on wires, bowing to his lord, and waving an arm to the approaching guests that they were to advance to the interview they had so mysteriously demanded. Lord Berkeley rose on perceiving two figures, still cloaked, and much bespattered from a long ride; and motioning to his janitor and men-at-arms that he would be left alone, he was about to demand the meaning of this mysterious visit, when the two men dropped their cloaks from their shoulders, raised the covering from their

heads, and he saw before him Gournay and Maltravers: the latter, advancing, placed in the hand of their surprised and unwilling host (for the Lord of the Castle knew and disliked the messengers) an order from the Parliament, and signed by the King's own son, now proclaimed Regent, that the custody of the King should still be continued at Berkeley Castle, but that Gournay and Maltravers were to be associated with Lord Berkeley in the safe-keeping of the prisoner.

In the then state of the times, the fact of "an Englishman's castle being his house" was a myth. The Barons, for the moment, were as powerful and as wilful as they were desperate; the Queen and her paramour, Mortimer, reckless of all. The Spencers had been executed; and the Earl of Arundel, the only charge against him being his loyalty, was put to death; and Baldoc, the priestly Chancellor, was arrested and sent to the Bishop of Hereford's palace in London, whence he was dragged by an infuriated mob, and ill-used to so brutal an extent that he shortly after expired in Newgate, into which he had been thrown by the populace: in short, violence held sway, might made right, and the fate of England for the time being lay at the feet of those who chose to wield

the sword, and to condemn their opponents even without a hearing or without trial.

The order from the Parliament, signed by the Prince Regent and backed by the Barons, now most anxious to curry favour with the rising sun, and cover their deeds of violence, disloyalty and rebellion, was, Lord Berkeley well knew, tantamount to a command, which, if he singly disobeyed, would cost him his castle and his lands: so, with a very ill grace, he bade his guests welcome to his board; and having seen them refreshed, he sullenly withdrew to his own chamber, his excuse being to peruse and consider the papers they had brought him.

Now very conflicting must have been the feelings that possessed my ancestor, Thomas, lord of that ilk; for only six years prior to the date of the imprisonment of Edward, Maurice, the then Lord of the Castle, being in rebellion, "the Castle and adjacent demesne" were seized and consigned to the custody of "Simon de Dirby," and subsequently to "John Froland, with the fee of twenty marks for his paines." "Hugh Spencer" also held the Castle "during Maurice Lord Berkeley's imprisonment," and it was in his keeping when the Queen of Edward the Second, the wife of the poor sufferer now within its walls, in passing Berkeley on

her march to Bristol, restored it with all its possessions, and "all the honour of Berkeley," to the very lord who was now entrusted with the imprisonment of her husband. The Queen had done this immediately after a decree of the King, made at Tintern Abbey, in which he had ordered the further custody of it to "Thomas de Bradston," to be maintained by him "with all the men he could raise." *

No one, then, can doubt the perplexity by which Thomas Lord Berkeley was surrounded. He owed the possession of his Castle to his Queen, while at the same time his heart discountenanced any discourtesy to his King—his King, albeit he had been deposed, and a Regent appointed in his stead : for, after all, the chief accusations against the unfortunate monarch, according to "Knighton," were, "that he adhered to buffoons, singers, players, drivers of carriages, ditchers, watermen, and other mechanicks," more than he did to his barons; "was fond of drinking, easy in divulging secrets, apt to strike his attendants for a trifling cause, *following the counsel of others more than his own opinion*, lavish in donation." That, he most assuredly was, for he gave to his favourite, "Pierce of Gaveston," "all his jewels,

* Smith's "Lives," p. 336.

his father's crown," and anything he had, according to Stow's *Annals*, p. 213, and swore that he, "Pierce of Gaveston, was his brother, and at his death should succeed him as the King of England." Curiously enough—and perhaps their natural belief was some excuse for their deeds against their sovereign—"the Barons deemed him to have been *bewitched* by Piers Gaveston, who had the art from his mother." In this present era, A.D. 1867, it is certainly not the fashion to blame sovereigns "for following the counsels of others, more than their own opinions." I confess, as a politician of the present day, I wish the Sovereign will, now and previously—previously, too, for some time—had had greater weight than the clamorous cries of mere self-seeking demagogues. Against fabulous desires put into the mouths of the people, succeeding Governments have indeed made no stand.

According to the historian Smith, and without much reference to the double-faced historical letter of Adam de Orleton, "*Edwardum occidere nolite timere*," "On the 5th of April, 1327, the King was brought to Berkeley Castle, and courteously received by Lord Berkeley, who was allowed five pounds a-day for his expenses." For some months after this, indeed nearly up to the

time of the memorable evening in which this tale commences, Lord Berkeley had simply been cautioned “to use no familiarity with y^e King;” and perhaps hints were given to him, which it was not his pleasure to take, to make the poor captive’s life as irksome as possible. Hints and innuendoes alike unattended to, the King, if kept in close custody, was assigned every comfort the Castle afforded; but now a change came over the spirit of the dream, and the prophetic shriek of “the Witch of Berkeley” had not been on the winds in vain.

On the morning following the advent to the Castle of Gournay, or Gourlay, and Maltravers, and after the substantial meal of breakfast had been duly discussed, it was then that Lord Berkeley and his two unsolicited guests met to consider the royal order they had brought, and to carry out its provisions. Its provisions were that, for the time being, Gourlay and Maltravers were to be entertained by Lord Berkeley at his Castle, “and associated with him in the custody of the King.” Rather a domineering and an insulting order that, to a powerful Baron in his own Castle, and at the moment exceedingly distasteful to the recipient of it: but look which way he would, both at the fact of the Queen’s so recently having restored

his property to him free of all fine, and then at the probability of the violence that would be done to him by the Barons, all now trying to curry favour with the Regent, or "the rising sun," if he demurred to the royal mandate, Lord Berkeley could see nothing left to him but an apparent acquiescence in the demand.

In all probability the view taken by Gourlay and Maltravers, as well as by their employers, was, that Lord Berkeley, finding himself to some extent superseded in his own Castle, would on the instant have retired in scorn to his house at Nibley, and left the King to the tender mercies of those who had been sent to look after him. But if this were their idea, for a time they found themselves deceived; for the Lord of the Castle, holding to the words, "to be associated with him in the care of the King," insisted on being consulted in all as regarded their charge. To make short of a long story, this state of things could not last; whatever mandate or wish was expressed by Lord Berkeley as to the prisoner's comfort, he found in its purpose was always tampered with and marred by the majority of two to one against him. So, weary and sick of such an association and such a custody, the manner and method of which he could not control, and being really at the time very un-

well, he threw up his trust, and on the plea of ill-health retired to his house at Nibley.

The moment his lordship had withdrawn from his own Castle, and left the two miscreants, Gourlay and Maltravers, in sole charge of the miserable King, then commenced the most diabolical inventions against his brain, against his health and life, that the most despicable of human hearts could form or fashion. It was evident that Edward II. was never to leave the Castle alive; but that his death was to appear as from natural causes, however artificially occasioned: and that murder, if done, was to be kept from public execration. For a time the King's keepers approached the desired ultimatum cautiously. The King was permitted to take his accustomed walk in the Keep Garden; and when out on one of these walks he was joined by Maltravers, who, with a show of much apparent kindness, proposed that the monarch should extend his walk to the more airy site of the leads. The poor King, with a throb of pleasure to which he had long been a stranger, gladly acquiesced; and when the sweet fresh gale from the Vale of Berkeley, tainted with the aroma of the rich grass, the falling leaves, and the wild flowers, a few of which, still blooming, seemed to await the grasp of winter, came upon his senses, he became abso-

lutely cheerful, and in a confidential vein *talked to Maltravers as if he had been his friend*. “Well,” said the King, “and how long do you think they will keep me here? I am dethroned, and a Regent appointed in my stead. What more can they want?” “Oh!” he continued, clasping his hands, “let me return into private life; let the Queen come back to me, to my bosom (from that she has never been absent), to my bed. I will forgive her all, and only love her as if I had never known an hour’s misery. My Queen, my beautiful Queen! oh, I could live for nothing but my graceful Queen!” “Hush!” said the King, breaking suddenly off from this rhapsody, just as they were approaching the gateway leading from the leads to the Keep Garden. “What are all those footsteps I hear—that trampling, ascending from the inner court by the guard-chamber, as if of men bearing a heavy weight? Let us see!”

“One more turn on the leads, sire,” exclaimed Maltravers, interposing, “and then we will to your apartment.”

They took another turn, but the spirit of the poor King had lost its buoyancy, and he again fell into a species of stupefaction, when they were joined by Gourlay.

His arrival was a preconcerted thing, an

announcement in fact that one of their machinations against the King's health had been effected, and there was now no wish for the walk to be protracted. As they entered the donjon keep, Maltravers, with well-affected regret, stayed the King from the usual turn towards the apartment he had had assigned him by Lord Berkeley, and making a sign to two men-at-arms to close up behind the prisoner, he led the way into a small dark room in the shape of a "D," which was the upper part of the donjon; the depth of the donjon itself lying, of course, immediately beneath it; and in the floor, close to a bed, a trap-door, which, if lifted up, disclosed its profundity and murky horrors. One bed, one chair, and a small table, neither a carpet nor rushes to cover the dark oaken floor, were all the furniture the miserable place contained. Then, on seeing where and to what he was about to be consigned, the poor prisoner cast himself on the bed in an abandonment of hopeless tears.

Had the villains in charge of the King doomed him only to a dark and airless room, without a comfort of any kind, that would have been bad enough; but during the King's walk upon the leads, the trampling that the King had heard was that from the feet of many men, who

were bearing up, to be cast beneath the King's bed into the donjon below it, the disjointed carcase of a dead horse, which by its putridity they hoped in time would breed a fever for the destruction of life. Every enormity that depraved and cruel minds could think of was then imagined and put in force. The prisoner was given putrid water to drink ; every sort of comfort was denied him ; and he was kept in close, solitary confinement—his food, his drink, unfit for human consumption ; and soon the stench from the putrid flesh beneath his bed filled not only his room, but every precinct of the donjon wing. Hearing what he supposed to be a stone-mason at work in the donjon-keep garden, he cried in vain to the man for assistance and mercy ; when, on being heard to do so, one of the soldiers from the little guard-room at the top of the stairs, in recent times most erroneously shown as the chamber in which the monarch met his death, came forth and ordered the stone-mason away. As if nature rebelled against these cruel proceedings, and would not succumb to the villany of man, nothing seemed to have power over the King's constitution. Though the entire of his days and a portion of his nights were spent in murmuring, in a low voice, love-ditties to the

Queen, who had wronged him in every way, as well as consigned him to where he was, still each morning, or rather each torch or candle-light, gave no token of disease, and it seemed as if the conspiracies of men against his life, by anything short of violence, were never to be successful. Providential pity for his sufferings was not to be aroused. To all appearance the prisoner had a chance to outlive his jailers, and the patience of higher powers who desired his death was somehow or other shown to be exhausted, and there can be no doubt but that orders came from somewhere or other that the King's life should speedily be taken ; but, if possible, in a manner that should make his death appear to have been caused by natural disease.

During the last portion of Edward the Second's existence, in which Smith says "he did nothing but lament his wife, singing love-songs in a low voice, and murmuring his grief that she would neither see him, nor permit his son nor any of his relations to come near him," one night, while the poor prisoner was thus occupied, so that even the rude soldiers and men-at-arms began to pity him, on the 21st of September, 1327, while thus seated or reclining on his bed, several men, the creatures of Gourlay and Maltravers, rushed in and

cast a heavy feather-bed upon him, beneath which they held him down and tried to stifle his cries, while in a barbarous way, with a red-hot sword—an enormity only equalled in its atrocious cruelty by the deed done in later years at Salt Hill by the Quaker Tawell—they proceeded to burn his intestines, so as to leave no mark of any outward violence. Through feather-beds, through leaden roof, and through the massive stone walls, even from that lonely portion of the Castle, however, the “mortal shrieks of the agonized King” went far and wide upon the murky air ; and, according to Gray’s *History*, they were literally heard “by the Berkeley people in the hamlet or town adjoining,” who, hearing the wails of agony and the cry, far-off and half-stifled as it was, but which but too plainly told of murder, immediately “fell on their knees and prayed for some departing soul.”

The bed that used to stand in the donjon chamber, and which was used by Edward II., has since been sold for a few shillings by those who are, for the time being, ruling in the Castle. It was repurchased by a friend of mine for five pounds ; for the first possessor began to be aware that he had in his possession a relic of bygone ages, and one connected with the history of England. My

friend, Mr. Waldron, who thus purchased it, very handsomely at once presented it to me, and it is now in my possession, with its old and very thick crimson-cloth hangings, and ornamental needle-work, and patched-up frame-work. The bed-room now shown as that of Edward II. was really the guard-room to the donjon keep; and the bust exhibited in that room as the bust of Edward II. is really the bust of Charles II.: the whole affair as to that chamber, from beginning to end, being a long-maintained mistake.

I look forward for the time to come when it will perhaps be my province to restore that historical fragment of a frightful tragedy to the position whence it ought never to have been removed.

On the murder of Edward II., Lord Berkeley was committed to the custody of Ralph de Nevill, steward of the King's household, and accused of participation in the crime. Previous to this accusation, on the fact of the King's death reaching him at Nibley—Lord Berkeley, still suffering from indisposition, repaired at once to the Castle, and took all care that the remains of the King at least should be respected. He had the body removed to a more decent chamber, when, as neither

King, Lords, nor Commons, took the least efficient steps for the funeral, Lord Berkeley had his carriage prepared to carry “y^e King’s body to Gloucester Cathedral,” where he had a fitting tomb erected at his own cost. I have, among the papers in the “Evidence House” at the Castle, seen the book kept by the house-steward of that day, in which he charges his lord, in very small sums, for “dyeing y^e lining of his lordship’s carriage black, and for mending of y^e rope harness to convey the body of y^e King to Gloucester.” There was a wide-spread belief among the dependants of the Castle in those days, and the rumour was still current among very old people in my boyhood, that the carriage which conveyed the King’s body to the Cathedral was drawn by deer. As far as my belief goes, that rumour got afloat from the fact that Lord Berkeley had introduced some Arabian, or, at least, some much-better-bred horses, into his pastures, and much smaller horses than the heavy war-horse, of perhaps Flemish descent, which had been used to carry mail-clad men.

Lord Berkeley cleared himself of the charge of complicity in the murder by the following oath. I give it *verbatim*, precisely as it was sworn :—
 “And the aforesaid Thomas [de Berkeley] says, it is true, that he is Lord of the aforesaid

Castle, and that he, together with John Mau-travers, received the custody of the King, to keep him safe; but he says, that at the time in which it is said that our Lord the King was murdered and slain, he himself was detained at Bradley by such and so great an infirmity, that nothing occurred to his recollection." The historian Smith, however, disputes, if he does not disprove, the truth of Lord Berkeley's deposition, and alleges that he was neither at Bradley nor sick at the time he claims to have been. In 1327, this Lord added to and "more beautified" his Castle, not only on account of the marriage of his only sister, but for the reception of his own bride, the daughter of the Lord Mortimer, and for the presence, at the same time with his father-in-law, of the Queen Mother.

Lord Berkeley, curiously enough—so Smith says—was not tried by his peers, but by knights; "the only precedent," says Smith, "pregnant in this kind." He was acquitted of all fault in regard to the deceased King save negligence, and all further inquiry put off *sine die*; or, in other words, abandoned. The King (Edward III.) then confirmed to him the Castle and "Berkeley Hernesse," with "a market on any day he pleased, and a mint, with a moneyer of his own," and

many things besides; and he was thus “reinstated in all his rights: while, on the arrival of his bride at the Castle, the tenants who congregated to receive her presented their lady with a handsome present” in those days, “of gold amounting to three pounds, nineteen shillings, and sixpence.”

CHAPTER XXV.

LORD CAMELFORD—MR. DEVEREUX—MR. BEST—CAPTAIN
BARRIE—LORD GRENVILLE—LADY GRENVILLE—MR.
COCKBURN—MR. HEAVISIDE.

It was in 1804 that the overbearing humour of Lord Camelford came to its end, in a duel with one of the best pistol-shots of the time. As far as I can discern the cause of quarrel originated with a woman, said to have been previously for a time under his Lordship's protection, whom Mr. Best met one Saturday night at the Opera. The story goes that this female wished Mr. Best, whom she had known before, to accompany her home, but he declined compliance. Now we all know that there is no living creature under the sun—I deeply regret to be obliged to say it—more bitterly revengeful and dangerous than a disappointed and personally rebuffed and piqued woman. Furious, therefore, at receiving this slight from Mr. Best, and knowing that people generally were afraid of Lord Camelford, she

threatened that, if he refused to accompany her, "she would set Lord Camelford on his back." In her own report of the circumstance, she said that Mr. Best had taken great liberties with her at the Opera, and she therefore said, if he did not desist, she would tell Lord Camelford; and Mr. Best replied, "that his Lordship might be d——d."

On the Sunday following Capt. Barrie, having found that there was a row, as the mutual friend of both called on Best for information, who most solemnly assured him that he had used no such expression as that imputed to him; and on receiving this contradiction to the charge, Barrie said he would see Camelford, endeavour to disabuse his mind, and make them friends again. Whether he saw him again or not does not appear; but on Tuesday evening, about half-past six o'clock, Best came into the Prince of Wales's Coffee-house, in Conduit Street, to dine, with two friends, Mr. Nihel and Mr. Triest, when Lord Camelford entered. He approached Best, and accosted him thus:—

"Mr. Best, I understand you have been traducing my character, and insulting my girl, Fanny, in a most ungentlemanlike manner. Such conduct, sir, is infamous, and you must be a d——d scoundrel."

Mr. Best replied, "My Lord, I do not understand what you mean by the first remark, but the last *no one can misunderstand.*"

High words followed. An apology from Mr. Best seems to have been demanded by Lord Camelford, but it was refused in the following words :—

"I have done nothing, my Lord, nor said one word to the prejudice of your Lordship, and assuredly I have nothing to apologise for."

Lord Camelford, however, not being satisfied, and continuing to be very angry, Mr. Best turned on his heel and left the coffee-room, proceeding to dine with his friends in a private apartment.

The press of the day, in a somewhat exaggerated account of this affair, stated that the two principals agreed on a hostile meeting for the following morning on the spot, and while at the Prince of Wales's Coffee-house in Conduit Street; but "the Upper Ten Thousand" will probably opine that they agreed to refer the matter to their seconds. Camelford, when he went to his lodgings in Bond Street, sent for Mr. Devereux, a son of Lord Hertford's; and about nine the same evening Best went to his lodgings in Wimpole Street, to consult with his friend.

Either some well-intentioned persons got wind

of the likelihood of the duel, or intelligence of it leaked out from among the servants at the coffee-house; for about eleven o'clock that night intelligence of the apprehended meeting was sent to Mr. Conant, the magistrate at Marlborough Police Office; and the same to Mr. Bond at Bow Street. The letter to Mr. Bond failed to reach him in time; but Mr. Conant at once apprised the police-officers, and gave them power to arrest the parties. Although there seemed to have been people very quick in giving the magistrates intelligence, those concerned in bringing the duel to a conclusion were quicker still; for, on learning that there was an intention to prevent the meeting, they devised their plans accordingly. The "runners," as the police were then called, were all over the street, now behind this corner, now behind that; stationary nowhere; and looking as much like private and unconcerned people as they could; and thinking how much nicer it would be to be taking their rest in bed, or hunting up murderers or thieves, with a good chance of government or other reward. All at once, about one in the morning, a chaise and four drove up to Lord Camelford's door, and stopped there; the same thing happening at the door of Mr. Best. "All right!" said the runners to themselves; "we needn't go peering and peeping

about now: we'll just keep out of sight, and nab 'em at the carriage-door They're a long time making up their minds to go; some more negociation about it, perhaps, is taking place." Two o'clock—three o'clock—four o'clock came; when, at about six o'clock, the shivering postboys and useless horses were ordered to return whence they came.

"So!" said the runners, "there's to be no fighting after all!"

They were mistaken in this; or, to use a vulgar phrase of more modern origin, the runners "were done uncommonly brown:" for the principals, with their seconds, had escaped by the back-doors, between four and five in the morning, got into two hackney-coaches, and before seven o'clock they were on the ground in a field behind Holland House.

Now, the reports of the day ran that here, at the affianced spot, Mr. Best again repeated his asseverations, that he had said and done nothing to affront Lord Camelford; and once more expressed a desire for an amicable arrangement. Lord Camelford replied that he had not come there to be trifled with, and bade Mr. Best to take his ground.

Now, of course, "the Upper Ten Thousand"

know that all this must have passed through or between the seconds; as, when an appearance is made pistol in hand, the principals never do anything else than fire or receive the fire: they are in the hands of their seconds, and are no longer responsible for anything.

No amicable arrangement being possible, the principals faced each other, and were ordered to fire at the same time. The ball of Camelford missed its object, but Best's took effect; and his lordship immediately fell, shot through the right breast; the bullet lodging in the spine.

On the fall of his antagonist Best ran up to him, and, certainly very superfluously, expressed a "hope that he was not seriously hurt:" which, considering that he piqued himself on the excellence of his pistol-shooting, and had addressed his aim at so fatal a spot, was rather the *vox et preterea nihil*. Camelford replied: "I suspect I am; but I forgive you. I believe you are not to blame, and you had better now provide for your own safety."

Mr. Best and the seconds then left his lordship on the ground, and hastening to a post-chaise, kept in waiting for such an emergency, took their departure.

The man at the Hammersmith turnpike, who

had witnessed the duel, on the departure of the seconds hastened up and asked his lordship "if he should obtain assistance and pursue them?" But receiving a negative to the offer, proceeded to assist his lordship to arise : but in vain. The spine and legs were alike paralysed. The sufferer was ultimately conveyed to Mr. Ottey's house, which stood in the lane hard by, where he was put to bed, and medical advice sent for. In the meantime he became insensible, and in convulsions. When his senses returned he desired Mr. Heavyside to be sent for; but he not being at home, Messrs. Knight and Horne were at once sent down by Lord Grenville in his stead. Hopes of his life were entertained on the second day; pain had left him, and he talked cheerfully and well: but, alas! this transient gleam was but as a sunbeam through a cloudy sky—the forerunner of a darker storm. Everybody save one had been refused admittance to the sick bed; and that one was Mr. James Cockburne, well known and approved of in "the Upper Ten Thousand," and celebrated for his diplomatic missions abroad. By twelve o'clock that night the turn for the worse came, and it was known that his lordship could not survive many hours. Still, a slight reaction did take place; and Lord and Lady Grenville

arrived from Dropmore at the house where Camelford was dying, as it was Lady Grenville's wish to be admitted to her brother's bedside—a brother she had loved with every sentiment of affection. She stood on the threshold of his chamber, the hand of Mr. Heaviside laid gently on the handle of the door—all was still: she had been prepared for the worst, but at the same time entreated to restrain all outward expression of grief, on account of the effect it might have on her brother. Mr. Heaviside did not open the door, for Lady Grenville, overpowered by her feelings, had fainted away; and when she was restored to animation, it was only to hear that all interview with her brother was useless, and that, on account of the acuteness of her own feelings, she could not be permitted to approach the bedside.

Lord Grenville then took his lady to town, and on that night Mr. Heaviside came to them to say that all hope was gone, and then proceeded to wait on the Duke of St. Alban's.

Now, there are none of "the Upper Ten Thousand" but who will agree with me in thinking that this affair, like many others of those days, was improperly conducted; and that Lord Camelford was permitted to dictate, when he should have been silent, if resolved, still thoroughly

obedient to his second. By the quotations from his general conduct which I have made, it will be seen that a duel was really his pleasure; and the risk of his own life, and the taking of the life of another, not to be for one moment considered in his rash desire for personal quarrel.

Every generous mind can but lament the death of a brave man: at the same time we all must allow, that if any man ever did his best to seek death in private quarrels, that man was the late Lord Camelford.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ESSEX IN THE OLDEN TIME—A SURPRISE AND EXPLANATION.

PART II.

ON a lovely day in the merry month of early summer, Constance June sat in her little garden, in the suburbs of the City, looking like the month of June itself; so sweet, so fresh, so bright and graceful, were her form and features. A hurried footfall caught her ear; a bound over the little garden-gate startled her; three leaps brought the intruder to her feet; and as he fell down from sheer exhaustion she saw in the travel-worn, dusty form before her, the semblance—it could scarce be called the reality—of him who, but a short time before, had been the handsome, spruce apprentice.

In a moment she knelt by her lover's side, and in a voice of deep emotion asked him what had happened. A few hurried words sufficed to explain it all, and then the next

demand on her attention was, what could be done under such painful and dangerous circumstances? for to shield or harbour a Roman Catholic in his heresy from the infallible priesthood and their intolerant Church was, in those days, to commit a crime of the first magnitude, and one that was sure, just at that time, to be visited with the most extreme rigour.

Poor Constance had no father; she was all in all to a widowed mother: but even then, and to her, the kindest parent in the world, she feared to report the arrival of the fugitive from priestly vengeance. As Scott has since sung,—

“ Oh, woman ! in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
When pain and sorrow wring the brow
A ministering angel thou.”

So poor Hunter found it in this instance; though the sweet and gentle Constance had *never* been “coy” or “hard to please,” at once, in his “pain and sorrow,” danger and distress, she “ministered” to him like “an angel,” took him softly to a room at the back of the house, and in secret, and by the aid of a female attendant, ministered to his comforts, and sought, in her own tender and graceful way, to give him consolation.

While this was taking place, the priests at

Brentwood, so to speak, were up in arms. Here they had caught a Roman Catholic from their fold in the act of reading the forbidden book, in what they termed "a steeple-house of iniquity;" and when seized by his priestly confessor, instead of yielding to holy authority, and permitting himself to be led like a lamb to the slaughter, had absolutely girded up his loins and fled, no one knew whither!

On the day following the flight of poor Hunter, his father at Brentwood was called on by a Roman Catholic justice of peace, known as "Justice Brown," attended by Father Sneckingrass as the informer and approver of guilt; and Master Justice Brown at once required old Hunter to produce his son, on pain of being arrested himself in his stead, or otherwise proceeded against according to sacerdotal law. In fact, they did attach old Master Hunter, and in some way or other, in a fashion, put him under arrest, giving him time to communicate with his son, should he divulge or his father become aware of his hiding-place, and, by inducing the son to surrender, so to save himself from further persecution.

The affection of a father, however, was too strong to give direct way to any personal fears for his own safety; and when Hunter found out

when, where, and how he could communicate with his son, he did not ask nor advise him to return to Brentwood: he only informed him of the circumstances by which he was surrounded, and the threats issued against him if he did not produce the declared culprit. Letters passed between father and son, but of no other effect than as above narrated; and so the affair might have continued, had it not been for the interference of William's mother. She wrote an impassioned and an appealing letter, the contents of which, in her son's breast, could meet with no denial; so, to ease her heart, and to save his father, poor Hunter resolved to surrender himself at Brentwood, and run all risks as to his probable punishment.

Then came the terrible, the painful duty, of breaking this to Constance, who now, because she pitied his distress, loved him, if possible, more than ever. On seriously thinking how this could best be effected, and with the least pain to her, he came to the determination, that if he intended to surrender himself, and act up to what he conceived to be his duty, he had better avoid all communion with the mistress of his soul, and, without speaking to her on the subject, steal away in the dead of night; for well he knew, if he saw a tear in her lustrous and loving eyes,

every other resolution on earth would melt away save the one, the desire to cling to her, as the sole boon that could make life desirable or worth an hour's purchase.

Late that evening these two loving creatures bade each other good night. Could mortal gaze have looked upon them through a glass, so magnifying in its power that it would have disclosed each latent tint of grief that lurked beneath the semblance of a smile, then there would have been discovered an unconfessed foreboding of some sad thing about to happen, which weighed alike invisibly on each, and yet, apparently, not enough to be alluded to or grappled with; and under these sensations on that dreary night they parted.

It was when the iron tongue of midnight had tolled its death, and almost been replied to by the first monosyllabic call of morning, that, holding his shoes in his hand, William Hunter crept from his attic to descend the narrow stairs, and pass at the first landing-place the door which shut him out from all he loved on earth, and which, as he supposed, intervened between him and the sweetly parted, tranquilly breathing, beautiful lips, the long-closed eye-lashes in sleep, the eyes beneath which might never see him more! Noiselessly,

and with a feeling akin to religious devotion, he essayed to pass; but that sacred door came open, and bearing a lamp in her hand, a dressing-gown hastily thrown on, and her long splendid black hair falling over her shoulders and far beneath her waist, pale as death, but calm and almost fearfully resigned, Constance stood before him!

“I was aware of this,” she whispered, “and I knew that it would, it must be so. I come not, William, to reproach you; you were silent on it from a desire to avoid giving me pain, and I am not unmindful of that delicacy: but listen—you are going to surrender yourself for the sake of your father; what fate you will meet with I know not, but this I *do* know, that the day will not be old when you are gone before I, too, am by your mother’s side. She *may* lay all the blame of this on your communion with me; but nothing can move me from the resolution I have taken, and, come weal or woe, wherever you are I will be near you. Nay—essay not to speak; I feel that words at this moment between us are dangerous to our resolution and to our duty. William, dear William, God bless you!”

If words were forbidden by the angel form that had thus crossed Hunter on his way to render himself up to the justice at Brentwood,

one long, loving kiss could not be avoided; for, with the arms of a lover emboldened by the prospect of a dangerous severance, he caught the beautiful Constance unresistingly to his breast, and then he hastened to meet the worst fate that an unforgiving, unrelenting, irreligious priesthood could assign him.

On arriving at his father's house at Brentwood, the scene there was one of the most conflicting and sorrowful description. Attached as the family were to each other, it was disputed between father and son who should bear the brunt of the misfortune which had been brought upon them by the son; the father even then urging the son to fly, and pleading that as he, from his advanced age, had not many years to live, while the son had, in all human probability, a long existence to look forward to: he, therefore, the elder of the two, should lose the least by being a victim to the offended priesthood.

To this view of the case the son, however, hesitated to commit himself; but while he hesitated his mother came upon the scene, and at once confirmed him in a resolution on no account to let his father suffer for his own errors.

The conversation on this point was still going on, when a cat-like foot-fall was heard at the

door : the door opened ; Father Sneckingrass entered, and calling to some one behind him, he pointed to William Hunter, and exclaimed, " Make the accursed heretic your prisoner, and convey him before Master Justice Brown." Two men entered, and the arrest was then complete.

From Brentwood William Hunter was taken to London, tried and convicted on a Saturday of " heresy and schism," and sentenced to be taken back to Brentwood, his native village and the scene of his crime, to be on the Monday tied to a stake, and on the spot to be consumed by fire.

Some narrators of this inhuman deed assert, that the period at which these events took place was antecedent to the time stated by me, and that poor William Hunter was ordered for execution on Monday, the 25th of March. That, however, being the " Annunciation," a fact which in that case seemed to have escaped his judges in London, as well as Bonner, and it not being a day peculiarly adapted for the savage scene of blood, at all events on a Monday he was kept at the Swan Inn at Brentwood, and Tuesday appointed for his execution — the first, or among the first victims, of Mary's bloody reign.

During this terrible era of bigotry and superstition and Popish domination, under the reign of

“Mary Fire-the-Fagot,” as the Queen was at times not inappropriately, but most irreverently called, Essex was rife in human grills. John Lawrence was roasted in March, and Nicholas Chamberlain was burnt at the stake in June, 1555; and five others in April, 1556. Innumerable small monasteries stood around and in the vicinity of Brentwood, and Queen Mary herself was born close to Brentwood, at South Weald Hall, at present in the possession of the Towers. It is the fashion to say that the child imbibes some of its earliest and best impressions from the nature of its birthplace, its soft attractions or its rugged outlines. Mary could have seen at that old Hall no such outline, and nothing of nature that was harsh. Its situation and deer-park are as rurally and picturesquely lovely, as softly graceful and as naturally and beautifully adorned, as anything can possibly be; so the common saying as to the effect of surrounding nature on the mind of the child in that instance was decidedly in error. True, a dominant priesthood might have perverted the efforts of nature, and the intention of nature's God, and reared the child to eschew charity and to dictate to the religious freedom of the soul, through fire and fagot; to countenance the most horrible murders, and to be savagely cruel on the

score of piety ; and towards Queen Mary, in this respect of hideous memory, we will extend that excuse for the iniquities enacted under her sign manual.

The day of retribution was imminent ; the walls that had been lit up by these terrible fires, and seemed to rejoice in their sanguinary glare, were in reality wearing but the hectic blush of their innate decline and approaching downfall : their death-doom was in their deceitful blush, and the hand of Heaven setting down their names as the things of man to be blotted out from the fair face of the world, as having sinned beyond their given time. Henry the Eighth was coming to uproot them from stem to branch, to assign their houses and lands to his nobles, to confiscate their wealth, and to make what they called their holy edifice his house of illicit pleasure. To bring this latter fact to the minds of my readers generally in the present day, many of them may have heard it said, in vulgar parlance, when any one was missing,—“ Oh, he’s gone to Jericho ! ” Blackmoor, near Brentwood, once belonged to these fire-dooming monks ; “ Jericho,” the name of it, was a portion of the priory. Bluff King Hal took it to himself, and when disporting with his innumerable lady-loves in private he went there, like other kings of later date to other places, and

deemed or ruled that then, like the ostrich who hides his head in a hole, he was, for the time, in perfect seclusion. Thence arose the by-word, which has lasted to our time, and very likely will still be handed down to generations yet unborn.

But we must return to the hero of our tale, and once more refer to William Hunter.

While in this terrible durance, with but a few hours to live, by the leave of the kind-hearted sheriff both his parents were with him, and urging him "to die nobly for Christ's sake," and to be a "martyr" in the cause of Heaven.

In the morning, when the appointed hour approached, the sheriff's son was so overcome by the strange, firm, yet unostentatious demeanour of the poor young man, that he threw his arms round him, and as he embraced him "bade him not to be afraid;" and then burst into tears, and was literally carried out of the room in utter prostration.

Through all these trying scenes young Hunter held himself erect and firm, for in his own mind he was the hero of a beautiful girl, exalted above his fellows by her affection, which he knew he had, and by the thought that when she heard of his death, unexpectedly hasty and rash as his trial and condemnation had been, at least she

would find that as he had, even at his early age, lived to love, still loving both her and the faith that had recently impressed his mind, he dared to die with the courage that became a hero, a martyr, and a man.

In spite of all the solemn pomp the Roman Catholics know so well how to assume, in the procession to the dark, the dusky pile, towards which they slowly wended, and which arose a hideous incubus or wen, unconnected with house or field, and standing at the end of the village by "the butts," there was scarce a dry eye among the hundreds collected on that memorable occasion. Not only did the good looks and youth of the doomed young man win the respect of all who were not priests and Papists, but the firm step and undaunted gaze of Hunter, as he neared the terrible pile, seemed to make a wonderful impression in his favour, and to thrill through the nerves of all the crowd.

The funereal and shortly-to-be-fired pile was reached! Young Hunter, in the breathless silence that reigned around, and when not a spray of the elm-tree moved—when, indeed, nothing could be heard but a confused trampling of many feet, boldly wrenched a fagot from its place, and then knelt down on it in prayer.

The act, the action, seemed to have stricken all with awe, and the fall of a pin might have been heard, so breathless was the silence around. At that instant, however, a slight bustle in the rear of the serried ranks of the crowd was heard. There was a swaying of heads and shoulders, as if something put all to the right and left, as it gave a passage in a direct line to where the prisoner knelt and prayed.

Whatever it was, it came on and on, until the apparition of a frenzied, beautiful girl, whose long black hair, widely and wildly dishevelled, hung like a veil around her head and shoulders, burst from the people into the clear spot by the pile, and with a shriek that went through the horrified ears and to the scared hearts of the people, fell on the neck of the prisoner and sobbed upon his bosom.

Then, and not till then, young Hunter's fortitude forsook him. He could brave the gaze of a thousand eyes—a thousand pitying eyes, unmoved. He could look into the faces of the scowling and enraged priesthood and their brutal myrmidons with scorn, and even defiance, and he could behold the grim preparations for torture and a horrible and lingering death unshaken : but to hear *that* once sweet voice outraged to a shriek of terror ;

to feel her throbbing heart beating on his breast, as if to seek his own; to find her tears falling as fast and large as drops from a summer thunder-cloud, was more than he *could* bear, and in a burst of agony they lay clasped in each other's arms.

Oh, what a time for a "miracle" that would have been! What a time for an offended God to have sent a handwriting to the walls of Brentwood—to the stem of the elm-tree itself that stood so close at hand—to have startled and terrified the gaze of the then guilty, smitten priests, and bade them "to do *no* murder!" "Miracles!" alas, if they ever come, never come at the right time. Heaven looked on as if complacently; the birds sang, and nature seemed as though no crime was contemplated; and innocence, trampled under the hoofs of bigotry and superstition, lay wrecked in the fiendish mockery of the moment, and *there was no help for it in Heaven nor in man!*

There *was* a symptom, however, of intolerance of this cruelty in the breasts of some of the sturdiest component parts of the crowd. It might have been stirred to action had one good man been brave enough to have made in to the rescue and led on the others. The quick, furtive, ever-piercing glances of the priesthood, saw this, and

seized the moment to hasten action: to have paused at such a time might have led to riot and confusion.

Father Sneckingrass made in, followed by the Romish myrmidons of the law; the priest took the fainting Constance in his arms to forcibly carry her away, while a strong man on either side of Hunter seized an arm and held him on the spot. He saw the loved, the trusted form, the beautiful, the faithful and the fond, borne as if in death into the crowd; and when the crowd shut the priest and his dear burden from view, then he once more felt himself deserted; but firmness returning, he resolved to die without wail or recantation, and to dare death thus forced upon him without a murmur at his doom.

Few words were spoken, but his would-be Father Confessor returned and said to him, "My son, a righteous doom is on thee for heresy and schism; the Church, against whose heavenly ordinances thou hast sinned, if offended is ever merciful. Behold——!"

He paused, and two men stationed within the circle made by the fagots immediately threw three or four of them aside, and in the narrow orbit thus exposed to view there stood the fatal post.

“ Behold !” the priest repeated, and thus continued: “ *Now* wilt thou confess thy terrible sins, recant the damnable doctrines that have crept into thy soul, and swear before the face of Heaven, the Virgin Mary, and these good people, that it *was* the devil and *that fatal book, the Bible*, that taught thee heresy and schism ?”

“ No, I will *not* !” replied Hunter, in a firm voice. “ If you *must* hear the truth, for Christ’s sake and the Holy Bible I will die. Pray, pray for me, good people,” he continued, addressing the crowd ; “ pray for the child, the boy, that was born among you — pray for my soul !”

“ Pray for thee !” exclaimed the old Justice, interrupting him, who, with the sheriff, had been appointed to see the sentence carried into effect. “ Neither they nor I will any more pray for thee, than for a dog !”

“ Thou Son of God !” cried the poor lad, looking up to heaven, “ shine on me with Thy light, for there is no help for me but in Thee.”

As these words were uttered, strangely enough the sun, hitherto obscured behind the clouds, shone forth, its beams falling directly and brightly upon the sufferer’s pallid, up-turned face, as they chained him to the post. Fagots on fagots were then hastily flung on him ; torches gleamed a

dull, lurid glare, shamed by the brighter beams of day, and an intensely thick smoke arose; when, amidst the stifling fumes and roaring and crackling of the fire, if other sounds there were, none reached the ears of the affrighted multitude, who shuddering, murmuring on, soon melted from the spot and sought their homes, prepared by that dreadful scene—though perhaps then, at the moment, they knew it not—for a blessed Reformation that should one day give them freedom of conscience, and shake the presumptuous Church of Rome to her foundation.

On the spot where this foul and fanatical murder was committed grew then the elm known to this day as “the Martyr’s tree.” It has stood for eight hundred years or more, and with its heart of stone may yet stand for centuries; “to point a moral,” certainly, if it adorns no “tale—” a frightful wreck, a witness of man’s perversion of the Holy Will, and of the most fiendish sin committed under the canopy of heaven!

These, and such hideous acts as these, to borrow from the Vulgate, at last gave to the priesthood “stones instead of bread;” shook to its downfall their self-claimed infallibility, which their irresponsible conclave in its arrogance had set up; and made way for a Reformation, at

first as simple and as pure in its sacramental ordinances as the examples set by the teaching of the Great Creator intended that that by which *all might be saved* should be. May Heaven still direct and keep us in the right road, and defend us against all attempted resuscitation of the Jesuit rule!—a rule as ruinous to the true Roman Catholic as it is detestable and dangerous to the maintenance of the Protestant Church. The Jesuit is creeping to our altars; and where the head of the serpent steals, thither at last will crawl the full length of the entire reptile, *if not crushed out in time*.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A LEGEND BELIEVED IN SIXTY YEARS AGO, AND REMEMBERED
NOW — HYLDA AND THE HANDSOME STRANGER.

PART II.

WE left Hylda and the handsome stranger who had made her acquaintance in the hawking-field, returning leisurely home across the lonely downs on the verge of the wooded portions of the forest, with the remainder of the ride before them to be accomplished through the woods, amongst which stood Sir Bruce's — her father's — old Halls.

The stale, inveterate haters of spontaneous, and therefore true, feeling — feelings engendered by no previous worldly or sordid thought, but springing from first sight and first love — never having felt the charm of such sensations, of course will blame the young and beautiful Hylda for taking at once into her confidence a young man of whom, save at a glance, she could know

nothing. Nevertheless, it was so; they had not ridden far before he told her his real name, and the name he wished to be known by for the time: he told her that he really came but to convince himself of her beauty,—he might have added something else, but he did not do so,—and now that he had seen it, like the moth attracted by the light, he had burnt his wings, and could not fly away, nor could he really fulfil the extent of his secret mission.

She listened, and ere they reached home she loved. Indeed they seemed to know each other as well as if they had been acquainted for years, or as though in former worlds their souls had been acquainted. On the full, sweet tide of novelty they sailed, their love the stronger and their souls the more impassioned in that all was fresh, and nothing had had time to dim by protraction, nor grow cold by the murmurings of reason whispering the question of what it was they meant to do, and whither it was that the aromatic airs by which they trimmed their graceful sail were designed to guide them. If he, the lover, knew what he was doing, she did not; but, with eyes closed to all but love, beguiled of all suspicion, and trusting to all he said, she gave herself up to a delicious dream, too beautiful to last, and,

perhaps, to be awakened from it by any means in existence could only be *painful* in the very essence of that hateful word, and lead to bitterness, distraction, and even unto death.

On her arrival at the old Halls she found her father retired to his bed, too bruised and shaken to be able to preside at his hospitable board, and too feverish—so the attendant Leeches said—to be permitted to indulge in his accustomed and potent cups. He, however, sent for sweet Hylda to his bedside, and charged her to do all honour to his guests, and to feast them right merrily, beseeching their stay till he himself should be able, in person, to thank them for their presence, and to have one carouse with them previously to partaking of the stirrup-cup on their departure.

Hylda received these, to her, most agreeable instructions, joyfully; and in one instance, at least, she did all in her power to make the Halls agreeable and to delay departure: but somehow or other, whether it was because there was not, in the absence of the host, hard drinking enough to please the tastes of some of the guests, or because they saw that the graceful representative of the family was entirely taken up with the young and handsome stranger, and that everybody else stood in the guise of “*Monsieur de trop*,” all the guests,

save *one*, took their departure, and Hylda was left alone with her lover.

The course of true love does not always run smooth, as we all are well aware, but in this instance there burst on sweet Hylda and her swain the full light and present peace of a glorious honeymoon, so to speak; for the moon *was* at the full; and though the weather was dry and cold, still the cloudless sky tempted them into the wide woods, and beneath the huge and distinctly-marked leafless limbs of the mighty oaks, and in the halls and in the forest they were now perpetually and alone together.

The bruises and illness attendant on his fall confined Sir Bruce to his bed and to his room much longer than was expected, and when he asked Hylda if his guests had tired at the delay of his confinement, and if they were *all* gone, she answered with truth—"Not *all* gone;" but she omitted to say that but one remained.

Sir Bruce had never seen, or at least remarked that one, and therefore his prudence, if he had any, took no alarm; he but thought only of *a* knight and gentleman who had assisted to reclaim his favourite hawk, and was content. That falcon had better have been whistled down the wind, and flown raking away for ever, or been killed on the

spot by an unskilfully-thrown lure, than have been brought to hand in the way alluded to: but fate is inscrutable, and man must helplessly obey.

Hylde and her lover were seated one day in a sheltered portion of the woods, where the rising Down to windward shut out the wintry breeze, yet thwarted not the sunbeam which made the air less chill. They had been thus in conversation some time, and in the hand of the young Knight was held an open letter; it had evidently been the subject of their conversation, and the characters it contained were in the handwriting of the King.

“Yes,” the Knight continued, “my own, my beautiful Hylde! such is the truth, and I cannot disguise it from you. I came here, sent by the King to see you, and to report if you were as beautiful as current rumour led him to believe. He now desires to know *why* I am so long absent, and commands me to return, on pain of his instant displeasure. I found you more beautiful than men said you were; I hated myself for having approached so fair a shrine on a mission I knew could bode no good; from my heart I flung the base, the wretched cause that brought me to your side, and vowed that for ever I would love you to the death.”

“ Here,” he continued, “ look, my own, my precious treasure ! thus I treat the commands of a brutal tyrant ; and may I perish as those miserable fragments do, if ever I forget your worth, and the affection you have bestowed on me ! ”

As he said this he tore the letter into fragments, cast them to the winds, and set his scornful foot on those atoms that fell on the earth beneath him. And if his arm encircled her yielding waist, and drew it more closely to his side ; if willingly on her part her sweet lips turned to and met his in a long, long kiss, what wonder ? *He* gave up for ever the ambition of a life to live at court, and to serve a gallant and a warlike king ; and she, entranced and loving him, yielded him everything in return, and heaven's own best angel must have sighed to see such devotion between two such gifted creatures, and yet to know *that they were wrong*.

It was late that same night when those two lovers reclined on a couch, or what would now be termed an ottoman, or sofa, and seemed to forget the passage of ever-moving time.

On that night her father had suddenly found himself so much better, that, late as it was, he called for a mighty pitcher of wine, swore at

his attendants, dressed himself as if for the day, his sword by his side, or his “dagger of mercy,” or *couteau de chasse*, in his belt, and left the suite of apartments to which he had been confined so long.

It is not quite clear—it never has been so to my mind—but that some accursed, jealous, and “niddering” brute, who envied the successful young Knight his rumoured position with the beauty of that ilk, had caused a poisonous whisper to reach the parent’s ear: be that as it may, the sequel is but too certain, and the narrative must proceed.

In what would be termed a boudoir, and by the light of the bright moon, which fell on them through, in those days, uncurtained windows, there still reclined the lovers, in each other’s arms. She heard, she saw nothing but her lover’s sighs and the blue vault of heaven; while he, dreaming not of danger, only worshipped all he knew, nor thought of sad disaster.

A terrible stamp upon the oaken floor, as from a vengeful foot beneath an armed hand; the gleam of a glittering blade, as like a flash of lightning it lunged towards the spot whereon the lovers reclined; a piercing shriek, and then again a blow and heavy fall on the floor, and one figure

only on its feet, passed swift as a fleeting shadow over the old Knight's body ; and then the room became as silent as the grave it really was.

The few words remaining to this sad legend are, that a wounded Knight (for the sword that had pierced poor Hylda's breast, slanting, first wounded her lover's side) was seen to gallop wildly from the ancient Halls ; and in the "Lady's Boudoir," as it was termed, father and daughter, alike pierced by a sword, lay, passed unto death together. They were the last of a race who dated their Saxon origin long prior to the Conquest, and who had been famed for valour and for beauty, at last only to "point a moral and adorn a tale."

The Knight and his daughter were buried in the churchyard of the old Abbey close at hand, but not in the same vault or grave. The Hall was soon after abandoned, and in the wars that followed was taken and re-taken by and from troops who held it in possession as a strategic point, till it was very nearly utterly demolished. At the Reformation the Abbey was confiscated and its lands given to the possession of the favourites of "bluff King Hal," and a church, a portion of the monastic structure, is now standing in its stead.

There are, to this day, detached portions of

ruins around that old graveyard, and many a mouldering record of the dead, placed there far antecedent to the memory of man; and on the south side of this stand two stones, almost hidden by the tall, rank, rough, damp grass, which, as if in mockery of man, still continues to vegetate around them when all beneath is gone.

The epitaphs on these headstones, though in some manner obliterated, are as follows. They are spelt after the old manner of the day, but for the sake of my readers I render them in a much plainer guise. In the belief of the country people these graves are still haunted by a spectral apparition in the shape of an old man clothed, or who appears to be clothed, in the undress of a warrior before he puts on his defensive armour. In one hand a flaming sword, with which he seems to menace the female inscription, while with the other hand he sedulously endeavours to eradicate the graven letters on the gravestone of the man. The letters seem to disappear under the friction he bestows; but for a time, for when he has eradicated the last line the words break out again at the beginning in characters of a blood-red hue, which sobers down eventually, in the grey dawn of morning, to their almost illegible condition.

The epitaph the apparition endeavours to eradicate runs thus:—

“ TO YE MEM’Y OF YE ——— KNIGHT.

A.D. ———

“ Ask not who ended here his span ;
His deeds condemn’d of God and man :
No good, in fact, adorn’d his course,
Each act but made him worse and worse.
One thing *was* great, which God supplied —
The day, the moment when he died ;
Man’s vengeance, too, that on him fell,
And sent him *reeling* down to hell !
Now — now beneath this narrow urn
The murd’rer lies, his doom to learn,
And, terror stricken, soon to see
A bleeding bosom at his knee.”

On the tombstone a little way off, but on the same site, are the following lines:—

“ TO YE MEMORY OF ——— HYLDA, YE ———

“ Pierced by the hand that gave her breath,
Her beauty lies in graceful death ;
Each soft tint wither’d all too soon.
A rose-bud perish’d ere ’twas noon.
Tell, angels, tell, alone ye know
Why love should blight such sweets below ?
Why should not love, that gift from heaven,
A longer solace here be given ?
Ye virgins, learn from this your fate,
How frail is all your blooming state ;
Each grace, each charm, may fade away,
And parent stem assign decay.”

So thoroughly believed in by the labouring population around the scene of these occurrences is the fact of the haunted tombstones, that the stoutest man will not cross that churchyard after it is dark; while the old women affirm that, with the usual inherent curiosity of their sex, they have, in parties of threes and fives, there being always luck in an uneven number, gone together as far as a certain stile, the limit to the supernatural ground, and peeped at midnight at the two gravestones. At that of the old Knight they could distinctly observe a shadowy form pertinaciously at work, while on the summit of the other stone, in summer nights, there was always more than one bright glowworm: in winter, a brilliant reflexion or borrowed light, supposed to come from the sword in the spectre's hand, played around the granite tombstone of the lady, as if the edges of the stone were of burnished blood-red gold. This old-woman's tale is said also to be backed by the "ghost word" of the little child, usually the truest of all. The children affirm that the first violet and primrose bloom on the grave, as they term it, of the "poor young lady," while not a wild flower of any kind ever grows near the other.

What became of the involuntary author of all

this mischief I never could define,—whether he died of the wound he received or of a broken heart, or sought a more glorious death in war, remains a mystery. May rest be, by this time, accorded to all their souls!

END OF VOL. I.

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